FRANÇOIS RABELAIS

MAN OF THE RENAISSANCE

A SPIRITUAL BIOGRAPHY

SAMUEL PUTNAM

by

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François Rabelais: Man of the Renaissance

For a number of years past, there has been a growing and sensible need of a definite placement of Rabelais. The Rabelais of legend, the vulgar buffoon whom Voltaire and Montaigne saw, has long ago been discarded; but modern opinion is still so far from any understanding of Rabelais the man that it is possible for some minds to see in him an arch-atheist, while others insist upon regarding him as a devout Catholic. What is the truth? This question Mr. Putnam sets out to answer. His object has been to give us *the real Rabelais.*

One of the great mistakes of all biographers of Rabelais in the past has been a too close and unscholarly identification of the writer and the man. It is necessary while laying bare the spiritual bonds between the two, to keep the two, at the same time, distinct. This can only be done through a first-hand acquaintance with the documents; and it is, precisely, such a knowledge of sources that Mr. Putnam, as the American translator of Rabelais, brings to bear. His materials were collected in Europe over a period of years, and his finds range, geographically, from the British Museum to the Library at Dresden, from the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris to the University Library at Geneva. At Geneva, for example, the biographer succeeded in excavating certain material which casts a new light on the relations between Rabelais and Calvin, as well as on the former's attitude toward the Protestant Reformation.

The book is illustrated with present-day photographs of scenes described or referred to in the biography itself or in Rabelais' works, and with a large number of contemporary prints. All the important documents that are extant are given in facsimile.

el uedere.
alazzo del Papa.
aſtello di Gᵒ Angelo.
pere fiume.
ario del populo.

6. S. Vitale
7. Santa Susana
8. Stufa de Dioclitiano.
9. San Laurentio.
10. Acque dotti.

ii. S. Giouanni
iz. Capo di B
3. S. Sebaſti
4. Arco de T
5. Tempio de

PEABODY BOOK SHOP

I A

...no.
...siano.
...dove anco deue,

...esser posto il colisco, edefitio grãde
...ma l'angustia del luoco l'ha escluso.
16. Colonna d'Adriano.
17. Arco di Settimio.
18. Campidoglio.
19. Ponte sisto.
20. Colõna Antonina, apresso a quel
21. Chiesa di s. pietro.
...las Maria ma

FRANÇOIS RABELAIS
MAN OF THE RENAISSANCE

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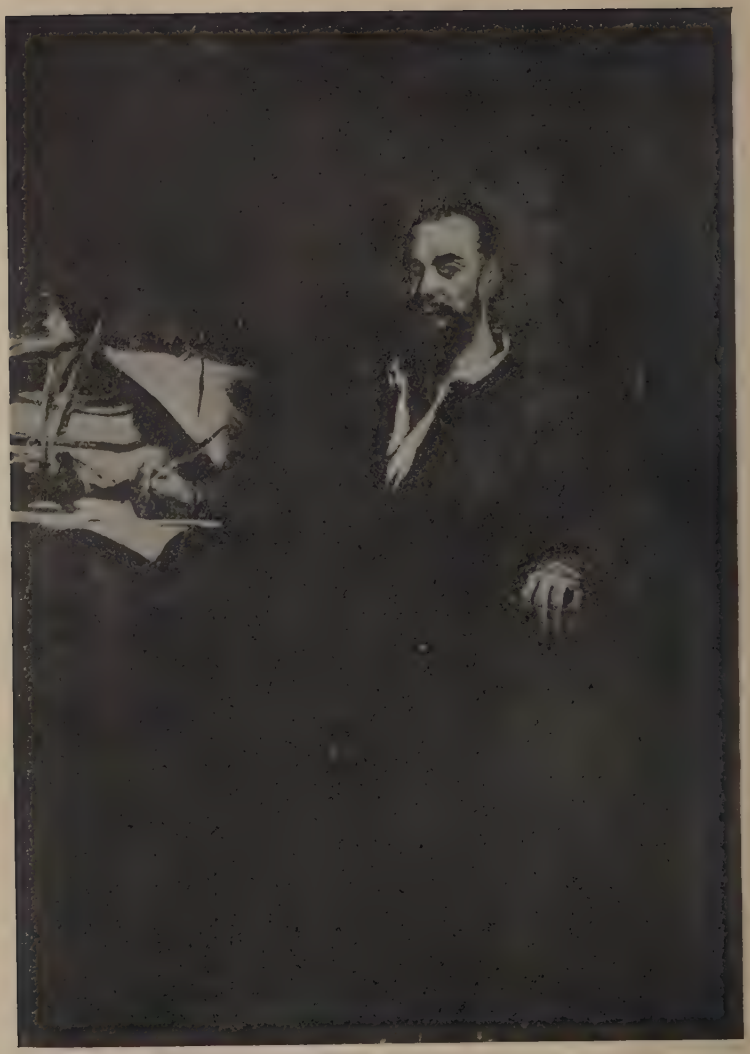

"The Veiled Portrait"

(Rabelais, by Delacroix. Hôtel de Ville of Chinon)

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MAN OF THE RENAISSANCE

A SPIRITUAL BIOGRAPHY

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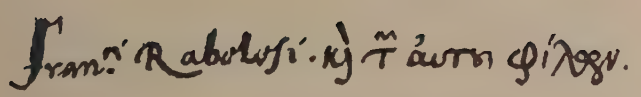


"Rabelais' Book and His Friends'"

Note.—The autograph reproduced above is the one employed by Rabelais, with variations, in inscribing the volumes in his library. It consists of the Latin (genitive) form of his name: Franci (sci) Rabel (a) esi; followed by the Greek words: kai ton autou philon.

A man's true life, always dimly defined, even for his neighbour, even for himself, cannot be utilized in any explanation of his works, unless it be indirectly and by means of a most painstaking elaboration.

And so, then, neither mistresses nor creditors nor anecdotes nor adventures—one is, rather, led to a system which is the most honest there is: that of conceiving, to the exclusion of all these external details, a psychological model, *more or less rude, but one which represents in some manner our own capacity of reconstructing the body of work which we have set ourselves the task of explaining. Success is very doubtful, but the task is not a thankless one; if it does not succeed in solving the insoluble problems of intellectual parthenogenesis, it at least* raises *them, and this in a light incomparably clear.*

PAUL VALÉRY: *Introduction à la Méthode de Léonard de Vinci.*

CONTENTS

Veiled Portrait (Autobiography) 1

A World Athirst (Cosmography) 19

I. Windmills in Mirebalais 89

II. Corrupting the Flower 113

III. "From Fear of the Mumps" 129

IV. "For the Love of Greek" 140

V. The Imperfect Sex 160

VI. Benefit of "Clergie" 176

VII. Piepowdered 193

VIII. Propter Bonitatem Vini 222

IX. The Therapeutics of a Laugh 245

X. Black Teeth by the Million 265

XI. In Which a "Little Devil" and a Great Drought Launch French Literature . . 283

XII. Breasts of Wisdom; "Mammillarily Scandalous" 318

XIII. Sciatica and the Holy City 335

XIV. "My Own Cow Country"; a Dynasty of Bellies 348

XV. The "Substantific Marrow" 382

XVI. Fagots Flame; Maître François "Does a Duck" 403

XVII. Salads, Princes and a Penitent 410

XVIII. Trundling the Diogenic Barrel 430

XIX. "Dear Doctor" 438

XX. Cardinals at a Christening 450
XXI. Kings and Choler, Dogs and Swine 454
XXII. Death and Life Play Ill with Friends . . . 461
XXIII. Rabelais and the Somewhat Too Eternal . . 477
XXIV. The Exile of Metz 486
XXV. Inspiration and the Eskimos 493
XXVI. The Secret Doctrine 499
XXVII. Shadow-Fights; Substantial Foes 514
XXVIII. Pantagruel and the Plain-Song 524

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND FACSIMILE DOCUMENTS

FACING PAGE

Frontispiece: "The Veiled Portrait" iii
(Rabelais, by Delacroix. Hotel de Ville of Chinon)

Ex Libris Dedication: "François Rabelais' Book and His Friends'" v
(Reproduction of Rabelais' Ex Libris Autograph)

1

Abyss of Learning, a Man of Monstrous Fancy" 34
(The Most Authentic Extant Portrait of Rabelais. Musee de Versailles)

2

"Lachryma Christi! It's from La Deviniere"
(The House, Probably, in Which Rabelais Was Born. The Dwelling Dates from the Fifteenth Century)

Chapter I 98

3

"Surpassing All, in Virtue and in Talent"
(Portrait of Guillaume Budc, Humanist Leader, Who Encouraged Rabelais and His Friend, Pierre Amy. Musee de Versailles)

Chapter IV 146

4

"The Overflowing Fount of Healing Lore"
(Autograph Oath and Signature of Rabelais upon Matriculating in Medicine at Montpellier, on the 16th. of September, 1530)

Chapter IX 254

5
"A Little Town of Great Renown"
(View of Chinon in the Seventeenth Century. From a Print in the Bibliotheque Nationale)
Chapter IX 258

6
"The Horrible and Dreadful Deeds"
(Title page of the *Pantagruel,* Edition of 1533)
Chapter XI 290

7
"Most Humane of Fathers"
(Portrait of Erasmus, to Whom Rabelais Writes: "I Have Called You Father, and I Would Very Willingly Call You Mother." After Holbein)
Chapter XII 322

8
"None Knew His Own House Better"
(Map of Rome in the Sixteenth Century. From the *Cosmographia* of Sebastien Munster)
Chapter XIII 345

9
"Doctissimo Humanissimoque"
(Jean Cardinal du Bellay, Rabelais' Close Friend and Patron for Years. Musee de Versailles)
Chapter XVI 408

10
"Most Zealous of Physicians"
(Autograph Registration of Rabelais upon Taking His Doctorate, at Montpellier, the 22nd. of May, 1537)
Chapter XIX 439

11
"I Still Shudder, and My Heart Palpitates in Its Sheath"
(Guillaume du Bellay, Chevalier de Langey, a Friend and Protector Whose Death Rabelais Deeply Mourned. Musee de Versailles)
Chapter XXII 466

12
"That Good Scout, Galen"
(Autograph Inscription of Rabelais on a Copy of Galen. Sheffield Library)
Chapter XXVI 501

13
"For the Soul Never Dwells in a Dry Spot"
(Autograph Inscription of Rabelais on a Copy of the *De Anima* of Melanchthon. Bywater Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford)
Chapter XXVII 522

14
"Nor Charlatan of the Public Square"
(Statue of Rabelais at Chinon)
Chapter XXVIII 528

VEILED PORTRAIT

(Autobiography)

Then, with an air of vast mystery, he covered himself with a wet sack and, drawing back a brilliant-coloured satin curtain, showed us a picture, none too well painted in my opinion. . . . Pantagruel thereupon remarked that this was a work of art somewhat like Daedalus', since even though it was but a badly drawn counterfeit, it still possessed, latent and occult, a certain divine energy on the score of pardons.

Book Fourth, Chapter L.

I

THIS is a lean man's Rabelais. Too long, the Curate of Meudon has had about him men that are sleek and fat and such as sleep o' nights. It is time he had a scrawny friend or two.

This is not the Rabelais of a night club satyr. It is not for bond-brokers' apprentices, nor for "the Village," nor (above all) for those jolly old Pantagruelizing lads who never step out of the house without their rubbers without fear of catching cold.

This is, if anything, a Puritan's Rabelais—a hooked-nose Puritan with a Yankee drawl and, somewhere back in a witch-burning past, the fear of God in his forebears'

hearts. A Puritan, but never a Protestant: there is all the difference in the world. (For there always had to be some of the lantern-jawed to be burned.) One, let us say, who has come "up from" Puritanism, and come up so far that he is able to take drunkenness and bawdiness with a certain intellectual detachment, knowing as he does that, even if Christ had got bleary-eyed at the Cana wedding party, it would not of necessity mean that he was a hopeless dipsomaniac.

I am, in short, tired of old men and old young men—fat always!—who speak of "Pantagruelism" and "Pantagruelizing" and "all good Pantagruelists." I never in my life have belonged to a Rabelais club or attended a Rabelais dinner, but I do not fancy I should care for either. And when I hear of Rabelais' being turned into a cult, on the part of those who never enter a room without being conspicuously announced by their architriclin, Sir Gaster—when I think of this, I laugh—a lean and hungry laugh.

I am sorry, I may be a bad biographer, but I am unable to give you my subject's precise waist-measurements; the "documents" unfortunately are lacking, and I for one would not give a Spanish maravedi to come upon them. But I can tell you this: his *genius* was not fat. Flaubert has spoken of his sinewy, muscularly protruding, bister-coloured, masculine phrase; and with Rabelais, genius is the phrase. As for the man himself, look at the portrait that may lay most likely claim to a near-authenticity, the one in the gallery at Versailles. Spirit and humour dance from the eyes and caracole over the cheeks, and there is a sensuous curve to the lower lip—the lip of a man who was born to talk; but it is all very far from the rowdy, open-breasted monk

with the face of a laughing Silenus, rendered popular by the early-eighteenth-century engraving of Sarrabat. Nevertheless, it was the Sarrabat Rabelais which became the type (though the learned Le Duchat and his printers had the sense to spurn it); and the conception lasted down to the Marty-Laveaux critical edition of 1872, where it is reflected in the Bracquemond etching.

This is the "smutty doctor" and the "jolly Curate of Meudon" of legend. This is the writer who never wrote until he first had drunk. Rabelais makes the statement in a work of the imagination; it must, accordingly, be a faithful biographic detail: such is the "criticism" which has been his. This is, finally, the "clowning Homer" or the "Homeric clown" (*Homère buffon*) of Nodier and Sainte-Beuve—the "unclean" Sainte-Beuve, as Ezra Pound would call him, —and the "drunken philosopher" of Voltaire. Even Anatole France, who had the good judgment to see his subject with those of his erudite contemporaries who know the man—even France sees around (as Voltaire never quite did) the old drunken monk legend. Yet, it is amusing to hear a schoolboy reviewer:

"Scarcely a sentence is devoted to the patent coarseness of Rabelais, hardly a phrase does more than faintly adumbrate the pornography of Rabelais' work . . . to paraphrase the proverb, I cannot see the man for the mind. France tells me little or nothing of the jolly wine-bibber of Chinon: he tells me much of the intellectualist, the satirist. I accept the one picture, but I still look for the other half."

Lost, somewhere between Times Square and Chinon: one wine-bibber. Return to the college boys, the Greenwich Vil-

lage maidens and the "curiosa" collectors. Handsome reward and no questions asked. But what if there was no "wine-bibber"—ah, what?

For my own part, I go back to that Versailles portrait, which, archivists tell us, is probably the most faithful of them all. The eyes and the cheeks are dancing still, but of Hogarthian hilarity there is none; no model here for the Dutch genre school. A man, it may be, who has "lived, done and doubted," and whose doubt and living have emerged in a smile too proud to part the lips. But the dominant characteristic of the face is dignity, the conscious dignity of a Renaissance humanist, filled with the pride of his newly discovered principle of aristocratic freedom. Whatever else may be true, this is not a *fat* face. The cheek-bones display too much of a tendency to prominence, while Gargantua's eighteen chins are weirdly wanting.

Who it was first fastened the stigma of the Paunch upon the creator of that "dynasty of bellies" represented by Grandgousier, Gargantua and Pantagruel, it would be hard to say. Possibly, it was Des Periers in his *Cymbalum Mundi*, which was published during Rabelais' lifetime. Rabelais, at any rate, has been seen as the *Pamphagus* of Des Periers' Fourth Dialogue. Possibly, it was Ronsard's friend, Joachim du Bellay, author of an epitaph obviously aimed at Rabelais:

Are you astonished that this funeral mound should cover another mound? But you will not be so surprised when you hear my name. It is I, Pamphagus, who lie here, buried under the immense weight of that enormous belly which serves me as a tumulus. Sleep and gluttony, wine, women

and jesting were my sole divinities while I lived. Who does not know the rest? I practised the art of medicine, but my chief occupation was practising the art of laughter. As for you, Passerby, accord no tears, but rather a hearty laugh to my ashes, if you wish to show a favor to my manes.

The myth had crystallized long before Hugo grew intoxicated with the reverberation of his own romantic vocables. Scaliger had applied to Rabelais the epithet of *goinfre*, while the historian De Thou informs us that the author of the *Gargantua* and the Pantagruel "gave himself over wholly to a dissolute life and the pleasures of his gullet." —And then, we have: the Aeschylus of grub. A Dante of the hogshead, and the seven circles of a vat. Jaw to jaw, the belly is king!

The paunch that Hugo saw was, of course, something more than physical. For it was the Romantics who rescued Rabelais from Montaigne's amiable patronage and the half-faced sneers of Voltaire and his sneering century. What Hugo believed he was discovering was the tragedy of the belly—the belly, always the belly!—and that organ, which was constantly "breaking the equilibrium between soul and body," and which "fills up history," must have its Alighieri.

Rabelais himself, the truth is, through the power and effectiveness of the symbols he employs, gives ground for such an interpretation. His romance is the perduring and inimitable epic of thirst, one pervaded from beginning to end with an "eternity of drinking," a "perennial inundation." What Hugo and his sonorous syllables failed to achieve has been accomplished, in large part, by the cool and patient investigations of modern scholars. Aside from any

direct light that may have been cast upon his life, and the darkness is still dense enough in spots, we now understand Rabelais better for the reason that we have a better understanding of his century. It has become a platitude to state that thirst is a Renaissance symbol—have not the bread and wine always been symbolic?—a symbol of that passionate craving for life, that hunger for the cosmic cycle of knowledge (the *engkyklos paideia*, the *orbicularis scientia*) which followed the revival of classical learning, the nailing up of Luther's theses and the inventions and discoveries of the latter half of the fifteenth century. We are not to be surprised, then, when we hear a blustering fellow of the time uttering a *par ma soif* ("by my thirst"), since we know that what he means is *par ma foi* ("by my faith"). That final unpronounced *f* in *soif*, in Rabelais' century, is not without its significance.

All this, to repeat, is near-platitude. Rabelais' audience in the past, as the geographic M. Taine has noted, has been composed very largely of "drunkards and scholars." The scholars now know that Rabelais was not a drunkard—he was too busy a man for that—but our best drunkards, do they have a glimmering of the fact? Not to speak of the young lady who, when the studio gin is running low and the lights have grown dimmer, murmurs to her *vis-à-vis:* "Oh, Bob, you are *so* Rabelaisian!" The newspaper rewrite-man, even, doubtless would be making use of the adjective, if it were not for the fact that he is working for a family journal. No, it is to be feared that Dr. François' audience —his understanding audience, certainly—has not widened greatly since M. Taine's day.

However, all this does not convey the animus in the case

—and what is a biography without an animus? My quarrel is not with those who cannot be expected to grasp the fact that everything a writer sets down in his works is not, invariably, true of his private life. It is not so much with those who think that Rabelais was a fathead or a potbelly as it is with those fatheads and potbellies who would claim "the Maître" as their own exclusive property. This is, in many respects, the type of person who used to gurgle of "dear old R. L. S.," and who now babbles of the "Olympian serenity" of the late Anatole France. For the fat of head are always sentimental, and it is to their sentimentality that I object. Being "Pantagruelists" initiate, they see in Rabelais an Apostle of Humour, and then proceed to thunder down anathemas on the heads of those benighted grubbers of the library who see in him something more than a humourist:

"No true Pantagruelist will ever be so foolish as to try to find a key to Rabelais, to try to interpret him in the light of a system, to say that in this passage or in that Rabelais is satirizing such and such an individual or such and such an institution. *Sapias, vina liques,* and leave all such profitless theorizing to those whey-faced dryasdusts who have never trolled a catch or drained a bumper. Yet we must not be wroth with them. It were more in the spirit of Rabelais to find amusement in their elucubrations."

Now, it must be admitted that few more amusing tomes have ever been compiled than Éloi Johanneau's 9-volume Variorum, and both the editor and his notes no doubt would have afforded Rabelais good copy. On the other hand, the basically real scholarship of M. Le Duchat, avid philologer that he was, has fairly well weathered the two centuries that have elapsed since his edition was published. Today,

the school of "historical interpretation" and all that sort of thing is dead, and to laugh at the Johanneau fraternity, once the first smile has worn off, is something like going off into howls over the funny hats grandmother wore. It is superfluous to admit that Rabelais cannot be reduced to a hard and fast system; his masterpiece, when all is said, remains a sublime chapbook. But the "whey-faced dryasdusts" of vintage 1929—and some of them have trolled a catch and drained a bumper, too—are, they like to think, intent upon something a little more important than determining whether the real-life Gargantua was Francis I. or Henry of Navarre. To reach the end of their road, however, they have to travel the road itself; and the scenery along the way may be a trifle dull to those not interested in the minutiæ of locomotion. It is, naturally, a bit difficult to convince the ordinary burgher that scholarship, like everything else in the world, is either an end in itself or it is nothing—that it is fully as important as making a hole in one, erecting a skyscraper, falling in love or Mussoliniing Italy—not to speak of writing a novel or painting a picture. It is, I say, difficult; and I am too tired to turn propagandist. I shall, therefore, be content with pointing out that the dryasdusts, and even the philologists, occasionally toss us a nourishing crumb or two.

For example, since the public appears to insist upon an identification of the author and his work, it may not be a wholly inutile thing to know that Rabelais' Frère Jean des Entommeures is not "Freer Jhon of the funnels and gobbets," as Urquhart has it, but rather, plain John Hackem, the des Entommeures alluding not to the monk's drinking capacity, but to his battling disposition. Another case in

point is Rabelais' "coarseness," his "pornography" (see our college boy reviewer quoted above). Apart from the fact that there is in Rabelais, as attentive inspection will reveal, nothing that comes within the provisions of the penal code by arousing lascivious desire or inciting to lechery—apart from this, it may be helpful to know that Maître François' language is not a whit more obscene than that which the preachers of his day, including those sainted founders of Protestantism, John Calvin and Martin Luther, were in the habit of using from the pulpit. Did not Calvin apply to his congregation the picturesque but now untranslatable epithet of *merdailles?* And compare Herr Luther on the phonic connotation of the Latin *ars;* if there are any Latinists in the audience, they will get the quip: *Tunc, vicinissimum vocabulum adest merda. Si quis artem illam osculatur, maculatur ab illa.* Friar Jean Raulin's "Sermon on Widowhood" still makes racy reading today, while the language employed by such reverend fathers as Olivier Maillard and Jean Bourgeois, even in the presence of royalty, makes Panurge seem almost restrained. What, then, becomes of Rabelais' pornographic coarseness? It is seen to be, simply, the mode of speech of a century which alluded to the obvious physiological functions with the same zest that was brought to the burning of a heretic, the consumption of a flagon or the dispatching of a Gargantuan repast. It was not the flagon that counted, nor the "chitterlings in season," nor the merry sizzling of a Lutheran, whose soul, according to the theology of the time, was being sent to provide a dainty tidbit for the Devil. It was the *zest* with which these activities were performed. Whoever says zest says Renaissance. So much, at least, the dryasdusts have accomplished

for us. There can be no doubt that erudition, like obscenity, has its uses.

In the works of François Rabelais, it is the erudition and not the obscenity that is the amazing thing. Erudition, rather even than humour. Humour there is, and humour a-plenty, though there are times when the humour fails to come off, and other times when the flavour of it and the salt tang have failed to carry over the space of four intervening centuries. But to see in the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel* only one gigantic belly-laugh is deliberately to blind one's self to a large portion of the contents of those rowdy and hilarious works. There are passages in those works in which the author is deadly in earnest, others in which he is deeply religious, while still more frequently, his jibe takes on a bitterness that puts it on the other side of the boundary-line between the provinces of humour and of satire.

And yet, our friends, those rollicking old "Pantagruelists," will have their way. For myself, I may be a whey-face and a dryasdust, but I have, I trust, enough humour left in these dry and withered old bowels of mine to see the humour in a Pantagruelist with a green umbrella under his arm. Selah! Have you ever, by the way, noticed what a dreary fellow your professional humourist is? It is not for nothing, I assure you, that their noses are forever peering down their esophagi. In Rabelais' case, they have made a humourless cult of the Great Humourist's humour, if you know what I mean; and they give themselves away completely when they go to put pen to paper. Ah, then, what whimsies are theirs, what billevezees and fanfreluches! And dickens take ye, viedazes, if you do not like it; may the Maulebec truss you all! "All good Pantagruelists," it would

seem, have short heels; for at the very mention of the Maître's name, they are prone to tumble over backwards into the seventeenth century. Their words must be "obsolete or coined or longer than a spade," and their language, a weird amalgam of Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty and, let us say, Akron, O., is such as, assuredly, "Carmentis, Evander's mother," would never have been able to understand or decipher. But there are some of us who would take our stand with old Geoffroy Tory: "I am sure I do not know who it is that can care for such writing as that, but to me it is neither good nor beautiful."

Do not look, then, dear reader, in these pages, for any hoary old moss-grown gimcrackalorums. Being destitute of humour, the author is likewise devoid of linguistic—and he hopes, of other—sentimentality. He believes it is a positive advantage to come to Rabelais, not as a devout, unquestioning worshipper, not as the member of a cult,—he has never been a one-book man, and the desert island contingency never has lured him overmuch—but as man to man, intelligence to intelligence,—as a man of the twentieth century, surrounded by squawking radios, towering skyscrapers, falling blimps and the whoopee-making legs of Broadway, reaching back across four hundred years and doing his best to understand and to reconstruct for himself, not merely the man that François Rabelais was, but the man that he is—for the writer of this biography and for this age.

II

For scholarship, after all, does little more than rattle the dry bones. (Having canonized it awhile back, we may, per-

haps, be permitted to damn it now.) It makes the past live for us, but it has nothing to say to the present. For each of its lusty foragers, the world ends with his own pet "period." But the artist knows the world does not end; he knows it began this morning. This throws a new light on biography. Documents have their place; but after documents, —what?

M. Paul Valéry has written some very daring words. At the risk of turning *traduttore* into *traditore*, I translate:

We think that a man has thought, and we are able to discover in his works that thought which comes to him from us; we are able to reshape that thought in the likeness of our own.

That is why every biographer must write his own biography first; that is why I have here written mine. That is why he must speak in the name of passion and prejudice and all the hierarchy of critical vices. That is why he must be vicious and violent, as ranting and as raving as Papini's Christ. "Enthusiasm," says M. Valéry, "is not the writer's state of mind." There, I must part company. All biography that is anything more than a chronological table is criticism; and criticism is not criticism unless it be an enchanted hurricane.

III

Something of all this was running through my head as the little French local lumbered down from Tours to Chinon. About me, through the windows, was the smiling "garden of France," Touraine—I thought of how an Italian traveller, one Francesco Florio, as far back as 1477, viewing this

same landscape for the first time, had fastened upon it the name of "*Franciae viridiarium*"—the phrase, therefore, is not original with Panurge. The sun outside the dingy, reeking, stuffy *fumeurs* compartment appeared to hold a certain sempiternal quality; it seemed as though it must have shone that way always. It could rain there, as I knew; but today, as I beheld that dazzle of light on the bent backs of a pair of Millet's peasants in store clothes, it seemed incredible. As the train rumbled along, a panorama out of the dog-eared pages of my youth flashed through my mind: Julius Cæsar and the Turones, the ancient inhabitants of Touraine; the city of Cæsarodunum, now a part of the city of Tours; the coming of Sts. Gatien and Martin and the establishment of Christianity; then, the Visigoths, the Northmen, the Counts of Anjou; finally, the immortal Jeanne and her Dauphin and their meeting in the château of Chinon, whither I was bound. It was all a part of the unreal past,—as unreal as history is to a schoolboy. A good deal more real were certain names which sounded in my ears: Béroalde de Verville, Richelieu, Balzac, Rabelais! Truly, the Garden of France had not been unfertile in her sons. And of those names, it was Richelieu that was the least lifelike, the most shadowy. Béroalde and François and Honoré still lived, for the reason that they had, like Panurge's Salmagundian gallows-birds, left "man for man behind them."

And then, I thought of my book and the subject of my book. I recalled the timidity of modern scholars in approaching the task of a Rabelais biography, a timidity due to the paucity of documents and the utter darkness which still envelops whole periods of Rabelais' life. I recalled, too, the false, the anecdotal Rabelais who had been erected upon a

groundwork of ignorance and a fallacious identification of the writer and his works, as his pretending biographers understood those works. Most of those anecdotes were too stupid to bear repetition.

Something, it was true, had been done. Rabelais' contemporaries, as it happened, had been a good deal more interested in the works than they had been in the man behind the works. It was not until the latter half of the nineteenth century that a French scholar, E. J. B. Rathery, had come along and, brushing aside all the old myths and relying upon documents, had proceeded to give us a biographic *Notice* worthy of the name. Rathery, as was inevitable, made mistakes, which have since been caught up; but his Sketch, animated as it is by a point of view as well as by a passion for the truth, remained the best biography of Rabelais that had been written up to the year 1919. In that year, M. Henri Clouzot wrote his *Vie de Rabelais*, of some fifty pages, for the Moland edition. M. Clouzot's account is authoritative, but it lacks the readableness of Rathery's; it is, in a manner, an expansion of the *Chronologie* which the same author had drawn up for the first volume of the Lefranc critical edition. This seemed to be the best the field had to offer: Rathery with his genial fire, corrected by Clouzot.

For at that time, M. Jean Plattard, whose work in connection with Rabelais' sources I very well knew, had not yet published his *Vie*. Indeed, the handsome Plattard volume (the date on the title-page is 1928) comes almost too late for the present biographer to take advantage of it. Upon reading through its pages, however, I find that M. Plattard has done little more than sum up, in chapter form, the state

of Rabelaisian scholarship to date, much as he had done in his tract on *L'État présent des études rabelaisiennes*, published a year or so previously. M. Plattard is a brilliant educator, and one whose work in his field this writer thoroughly admires; but the thing his *Life* lacks is—fire, the presence of a passionate and informing point of view.

But at the time, as I say, I had not seen M. Plattard's biography. I was aware of others who had made contributions, and valuable ones, to our knowledge of Rabelais the man, among them, M. Arthur Heulhard and Mr. Arthur Tilley. Toward Prof. Tilley's *François Rabelais* (published at London, in 1907), I felt a special warmth. But still, I could not find, anywhere, what I was seeking: a rounded view of the man, one which, while making use of all the aids and props of scholarship, should yet transcend erudition and attain a creative view.

The train was pulling up to the *gare* at Chinon. You step out in some bewilderment, looking about in vain for the town which, as jovial tradition has it, was founded by Adam's erring son. You do not find the town, but you do find the Vienne—you cannot miss it. You walk along it for what seems like a lengthy stretch, revelling in its sun and shade, until the shops and the wineshops begin to thicken, and the first thing you know you are in the public square, looking up at the pensive, seated, forward-leaning statue of Rabelais, a belated municipal tribute which Chinon paid to her illustrious son along back about 1882. For the Château, to this day, is the tourist feature of the town, and the saintly memory of Jeanne d'Arc overshadows that of the creator of Pantagrueline mythologies, who was, after all, a bit of a jolly dog.

On this particular day, Dr. François was sitting there, leaning forward in a petrified quizzicality; but other sign of life there was none. I wandered down street after street without coming upon a human being. Suddenly, a cat flashed across my path, a streak in the sun; and from that day to this, when I think of Chinon, I think of that cat and of the sun and of a city of the dead.

Life did materialize, eventually, and after we had visited the "Rabelais house," and after we had stopped in at a wineshop and sampled the home-growth and wondered if it was the same *vin pineau* from La Devinière which rendered Rabelais' tipplers so talkative, someone spoke to us of a portrait of Rabelais which was to be found at the *mairie*, in the *salle des fêtes*. We decided to investigate.

There followed then, after we had found the Hôtel de Ville, a search for a tottering concierge. Having been duly prevailed upon, as is the custom of the country, she grumblingly—for her joints were no longer as supple as they once were—led us through a *rez-de-chaussée* where the village fire-department found housing and up a flight of interminable stairs. Having unlocked the *salle*, which appeared to be a rustic and deserted theatre, she conducted us up to the rear of the stage and there, with some impressiveness and the expectation that we would be duly impressed, drew back a curtain.

Before us was the not exactly famous portrait of Rabelais by Delacroix. This portrait is very little known even to Rabelais specialists, for the reason that, being a purely imaginative conception on the part of a nineteenth-century artist, even though an artist of Delacroix' dimensions, it can lay no claim to archæological interest; it accordingly

will not be found mentioned in the treatises. The history of the picture is a somewhat unusual one. First exhibited at the Salon of 1834, along with a number of other Delacroix canvases, it was, according to one authority, "probably not deemed worthy of Versailles, and so was presented to the provincial library of Chinon." But according to one of the latest Delacroix monographers, M. Étienne Moreau-Nélaton, this picture, bearing the title "Portrait en pied de Rabelais," was painted by ministerial commission and "destined to adorn the Chinon library." However this may be, the canvas has been overlooked by artists and art-lovers, including Delacroix followers, almost as unanimously as it has been by those more immediately concerned with the subject. M. Raymond Escholier, in his two exhaustive Delacroix volumes, does not reproduce it, and as I recall, does not even refer to it; while M. Moreau-Nélaton informs us that he, in 1918 or thereabouts, was the first to train a camera upon it. Yet the portrait has had, and has, its admirers. Among these was Alexandre Descamps, who, in connection with the 1834 Salon, devoted an interesting article to it, while M. Lassalle-Bordes has something to say of Delacroix' superiority, as therein revealed, as a portraitist of the imagination.

In any event, here was the picture. I had never seen it before, and I was startled. Startled by the romantic emergence of this figure out of a dark nothingness, but startled above all by the sensual glow of the flesh and by the sadness which seemed to emanate from that flesh and to hover over all. Here was neither the monastic debauchee nor the possibly over-intellectualized "*type Rabelais-docteur.*" Here was neither a Silenus nor a restrained Democritus. Here was tragedy—something of that same tragedy, it might be, that

Hugo scented underneath all his verbiage about the belly. For the tragedy of the flesh—and there is here no desire to do another Hugo—is something more than the tragedy of the abdominal cavity. The tragedy of the flesh is the artist's tragedy, and here was the artist's Rabelais: a beardedly youthful François, with the thinker's long head and a tall forehead balancing a pair of lips that meant talk and trouble.

Romantic? Certainly, it was romantic. Rabelais, as has been said, was discovered by the Romantics, of whom Delacroix was one of the greatest. This was a Rabelais done by Baudelaire's friend,—Baudelaire's painter, one might say. It was a Rabelais brought down across those four dimming centuries and reconstructed into a "psychologic" for that age which is the ever-present Now. A Rabelais rescued alike from the Gastrolaters and the Dryasdusts. It was the thing I was looking for: a *lean and hungry* Rabelais.

"*Merci, Monsieur,*" murmured the rheumatic concierge, as my 10-franc note glided into her palm.

A WORLD ATHIRST

(*Cosmography*)

Up and at this wine! Take a good deep swig, my lads! . . . Every good drinker, every good and gouty one, if he is thirsty, let him come to this barrel of mine . . . if the wine is to the taste of the lordship of their lordships, then let them drink up, fully, freely, boldly. . . . And do not be afraid that the wine will give out, as it did at the wedding of Cana in Galilee. The more you draw out through the spout, the more I'll pour in through the bunghole. In this way, the barrel will prove inexhaustible. It comes from a live spring and a perpetual vein.

PROLOGUE TO BOOK THIRD

I

THE Middle Ages never existed.

The journalistic John Addington Symonds and others to the contrary, modern historians of scientific temper know that the content which the phrase commonly holds for the popular mind is a myth, a phase and a provocative tool of that impinging superstition of the modern world—the Superstition of Humanism.

When Flavio Biondo surveyed the world from 410 to 1410 and, conveniently, laid it out in a series of "decades,"

he was doing no more than to flatter the self-centring illusions of those of his contemporaries who were zealously devoted to the newly fashionable *litterae humaniores*. Hence the picture of a vast expanse of time, as mortal reckoning goes, extending from the fall of the Roman Empire in the West in 476 to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, a dark and desolate waste peopled by the scholastic ghosts of thought, the intellect numbed and shivering, and with those twin Juggernauts, the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire, crushing all beneath them. Such was the background that had to be painted in, to provide relief for the Humanist portrait. Read a popularizer like Symonds, and you will get this latter picture: a world that has been blindfolded for centuries suddenly tearing the bandages from its eyes and awakening to the fact that life is life and filled with a spring-stepped joy.

It is a charmingly naïve conception—charming, but naïve. Unfortunately, the working out of human destinies in a corporate society is not quite so simple an affair as all that. The properly equipped historian of today, believing in evolution rather than in revolution, sees that stretch of years to which we have given the name of "Middle Ages" rather as a downward, then a long upward slope. He will even assail the schoolboy's treasured dates. The deposition of Romulus Augustulus, he will assure you, was by no means a world-shaking event; but what he will do is to date the beginning of the modern world from the fifth-century dismemberment of the Roman Empire—the beginning of the modern world, not of any "Middle Ages." For his interest is, naturally, political; and he sees in the rude inceptions of national states

which followed the breakup of the Empire in the West a line of political development that is still continuing.

That there was a "Dark Age" our historian friend will admit. That was the initial downward slope from the fifth to the tenth centuries, marked by tribal warfare and culminating in the inroads of Northman, Saracen, Hungarian and Slav; this was the age of the Feudal lord and his stronghold.

Ask any man of the crowd to point out for you the definitive expression of mediævalism and the mediæval mind, and he will, doubtless, gesture vaguely in the direction of Dante and the *Divina Commedia.* Yet it is to be noted, by way of enlightening example, that it was in Dante's own age, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that the foundations of our modern common law were being laid, in the form of trial by jury, the Magna Charta, etc., in far-away Britain, then a frontier of civilization. And even Dante, while he sums up his age and embodies, apotheosizes its feeling, while he is of his time as much as he is of his race, still is not to be sharply demarcated from the literary Humanists who follow him. Does he not, in a manner, anticipate the Revival of Classical Learning by taking Vergil as his guide in hell?

That upward slope, which has been spoken of, really began with the eleventh century. We have then, as a result of the Crusades, commerce as usual coming after religion, a commercial and industrial renaissance which was to find its logical outlet in the geographic discoveries of the latter half of the fifteenth century.

So much for the political and economic aspects. But what

of the human mind? What was it doing all this time? Lulled to sleep by the dissertations of the "Subtle" and the "Angelic" Schoolmen, on such weighty topics as: How many angels could dance together on the point of a needle, and the like? That is a part of the popular picture. Chroniclers with a flair for the picturesque have gleefully pounced upon the weaker specimens, overlooking the fact that not all the Schoolmen even were orthodox (e. g., Scotus Erigena and Abelard), while by no means all the intellectuals of the age were to be found in the ranks of the Scholastics. Moreover, it has not as yet been established that dialectic stultity is confined to any sect or era; an hilarious *Philosophical Cream* might be compiled for almost any century—(the Messrs. Mencken and Nathan might try their hand at one for our own). Do we not find Plutarch and Macrobius discussing the grave question as to which came first, the chicken or the egg?

As for scholasticism per se, time's whirligig continues to bring in its not unamusing revenges. Authorities who cannot in any way be accused of a lurking sympathy for their philosophy will tell you that the Schoolmen were searching for the truth "with scientific eagerness," as Prof. Shotwell puts it. And it would appear from a glance at the present literary scene that the *Summa Theologica* is not yet dead, since at least one of those same despised "Scholastics" is now moulding some of the most earnest young thought of our day.

II

And yet, it was not the same world on which a child born in the year 1500 or shortly before opened his eyes. What

had happened? Constantinople, as every schoolboy knows, had fallen; but this, probably, no more than the removal of Augustulus, would in itself have changed the complexion of a world. There are things more important than the trend of empires. Which will have the more far-reaching effect, the World War or the Edison incandescent?

The closing decade of the fourteenth century came as the climax to a period of invention and discovery, a period which, on its inventive side, may only be compared to the one which began in the nineteenth century, and in which we are still living. Four of these inventions—gunpowder, paper, printing and the mariner's compass—have altered the destiny of the species.

Who it was discovered gunpowder—whether it was the German monk, Berthold Schwartz, to whom the monument stands in Freiburg, or Roger Bacon a century before—matters little. What does matter is—Journey to Fuenterrabia in northern Spain,—that *muy noble, muy leal, y muy valerosa ciudad,* as Philip IV. termed it in his charter—enter the deserted, crumbling imperial palace, climb the cold stone steps, past the gaping apertures, until you come out on the roof, with a superb view of the Bay of Biscay glistening beneath the sun. Look down at the village below, now become a tourist's show-place, populated with hotels, villas and American socks at the haberdasher's. Then, forgetting the tourist and his kind, let your glance return; and as you look out over the bay once more, think of how that cadent pile came to be there, how it was thrown out as a northernmost defence against a threatening enemy beyond the Pyrenees; and then think of how, and why, it ceased to be a defence. For with the coming of cannon and their fire, Fuenterrabia, the

"most noble, most loyal and most valorous," lost all meaning. And this is but one experience, one which might be repeated all over the continent of Europe.

But how did this invention of the Evil One, as Gargantua, who represents an eldering generation, looks upon it—and we find cannon playing a prominent part in the hell of the old Mystery Plays—how did this newfangled, flame-belching Satan-on-wheels affect the inner man? For we, the primitives of a new and menacing Machine Age, are only too well aware that the machine does have its effect upon the man. Our books, no longer written in a painstaking steel-engraver's script, but pounded out upon a standard keyboard, do not have the same ring; and who will maintain that conversation or flirtation, cookery or concupiscence, done to the Mazda's glare, are quite the same as those same pursuits when carried on to the candle's mellow glow? The flivver alone has wrecked a civilization, while the radio rasps out its raucous epitaph. All this is the stock-in-trade of the point-with-pride boys on their view-with-alarm days. And the coming of this novel machine-made death in the fourteenth century—at Cividale, at Creçy and, later, at Harfleur—was viewed with considerable alarm by those who beheld in it the tottering of a cherished world: the world of feudal chivalry. Anyone who would see what artillery did to the soul of man has but to read the Loyal Servant's life of the Chevalier Bayard, for whom the phrase *sans peur et sans reproche* was made to live; read the Loyal Servant, and then, by way of perspective, read the recent biography of the Chevalier by Dr. Shellabarger. Bayard was dying Chivalry's last flare, at the cannon's mouth.

But the machine brings with it, not infrequently, contin-

gencies more dreadful than death, though these, being somewhat distant, commonly go unglimpsed. At the moment, for example, it is not a vision of bomb-hurling planes over Wall Street that fills one with terror, so much as the imminent prospect of the air's being blackened with winged flivvers, dropping banana-peels, crackerjack-boxes and a general odor of the householder's Sabbath merrymaking; it is the thought of John R. Jones of Elkhart, Ind., or Mooseheart, Ill., week-ending in Siberia and desecrating even the Arctic wastes with good American trademarks. Yet, we find aviation being boosted by every chamber of commerce in the land as the age's latest boon.

And so with the enthusiastic fifteenth and sixteenth-century Humanists, freshly keyed up by the discovery of ancient manuscripts and the ensuing Revival of Classical Learning. They looked upon the invention of Gutenberg or Coster as nothing less than a heaven-sent means of propagating the New Enlightenment, as one to counteract the diabolic culverin. We find the two inventions juxtaposed in Gargantua's doting letter to his son, in the eighth chapter of the first book of Rabelais' *Pantagruel*.

"Printed books in current use," writes the old man, "are very elegant and correct. The latter were invented during my lifetime, through divine inspiration, just as, on the other hand, artillery was invented through the suggestion of the devil."

Gargantua could not have foreseen what something like universal literacy was to do to literature; much less could he have foreseen the modern newspaper tabloid. Would he have been quite so enthusiastic, had he been able to do so?

But the Humanists, for whom Gargantua's letter speaks,

had no doubts on the subject. They were living in the golden age of literacy; and contrasted with the schoolroom Donatus, Facetus, Theodolus and Alanus *in parabolis*—the "Eight Moral Authors" of the day—the New Learning, rescued from the doddering old churchly pedagogues and based upon the models of a classic antiquity, seemed the veritable panacea. This panacea the printing-press was to spread; and we find, along with new teachers and new schools, new printers and new book-shops springing up everywhere.

As for the last invention in the list, the mariner's compass, it did not come suddenly, out of a clear sky—some form of the instrument has been variously ascribed to the Chinese, the East Indians, the Arabs and other primitive peoples—but for a number of centuries preceding the Renaissance (there is an allusion to the magnetic needle in the twelfth book of the *Paradiso*), its use had been gradually perfected, in a manner to make possible the revolutionary navigations and discoveries of Da Gama and Columbus.

III

That child of ours, born around the year 1500, opened his eyes on a new map of the world. Bartholomeu Diaz had rounded the Cape of Good Hope, Columbus and Vespucci had discovered America, and Vasco da Gama had opened up the sea route to the Indies. The effect of this tremendous geographic expansion, compressed practically within the decade from 1489 to 1497–8, simply cannot be put down on paper, or if it is put down, tends inevitably to take on the coldness of a text-book page. On the other hand, here as in connection with other phases of what we know as "the Renais-

sance," it is easy to become rhetorical, forgetting that, in the 1490's as in the 1920's, propinquity probably performed its usual chore. It is probable that, even after Columbus and Da Gama had come back and the news of their discoveries had been noised abroad, life kept much of its quotidian sameness. But a new breath there assuredly was upon the air, and a new spirit that was eventually to percolate through every cranny of life, into every nook of human activity and endeavour. Lindbergh slips into his pilot's seat and hops across the Atlantic on his youthful nerve and a sandwich. In an age of hyper-perfected communication and one that has learned to capitalize the communicable sensation of the moment, he at once becomes a national and international hero. But supposing, if it can be supposed, that there had been no cables, no telegraphs, telephones or daily journals, what immediate stir would his exploit have created? Nevertheless, whether the achievement were heard or unheard of, the literature of the next hundred years, national boundary-lines, the very shoes we wear would not be the same as they would have been if "We" had never flown.

Suppose we limit ourselves, for the moment, to one field alone, literature, and to one country, France. Modern French literature may be said to begin with the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* (this work, in any case, marks the beginning of French prose). The *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* came upon the eve of the period of geographic expansion. With this collection of tales it is worth while contrasting such a work as the *Gargantua and Pantagruel.* The *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* are in a simple, straightforward narrative manner; whereas in Rabelais we find, enveloping a certain native terseness, a gorgeous redundancy of language. But what is more

significant, we find in the latter work a boundless and irrepressible exuberance, together with a vast and overflowing erudition, of which the author's language is but a mirror, although the mirror is the man. From where does this new, this lusty and lustful exuberance derive? Are we to dismiss the question by saying that Rabelais is Rabelais, and would have been Rabelais in the sixth or the sixtieth as well as in the sixteenth century? But it is to be noted that, as often happens, one towering figure, even though he towers, does not stand alone. There are to be found in the same half-century, roughly, from 1500 to 1558, at least two minor Rabelais', Noël du Fail and Bonaventure des Periers, men with, in a lesser degree, the same creative zest for life, the same turn of language. In the half-century following, comes Béroalde de Verville, whose *Moyen de Parvenir*, with the *Heptameron* and Des Periers' *Cymbalum Mundi*, deserves to stand at only a slight remove from the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel*.

Yet another profitable contrast may be had by juxtaposing Rabelais and Villon, Villon who, with Jean Le Maire de Belges and the Greek Lucian, was Rabelais' master. It might be better not to attempt the contrast in words. Any one who reads the two—and who reads one reads the other—will get what is meant. None can deny that Villon has a zest, and even an exuberant feeling for life; but that zest and that exuberance are not those of Rabelais or Des Periers. If there was such a thing as a *moyen age*, Villon surely belonged to it.

Then what, the question may be repeated, had occurred? Was this not-to-be-doubted new breath in literature one that

had been wafted back from far America and the Indies, or was it, merely, the result of the fall of Byzantium and the transfer of classic treasures to Italian shores, all this leading to the Italian Renaissance and the Revival of Learning? It was one, it would seem, too redolent of life not to have come out of life, rather than out of manuscripts and marbles. Whatever the answer, one thing is certain: putting aside the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles,* modern French literature may be said to have begun, freely speaking, with the discovery of America. The latter event introduced an exotic element that is distinctly visible in the literature of the sixteenth century, an influence comparable to that which had previously been exerted by Marco Polo and Sir John Mandeville, and by such mediæval travellers as Ibn Batuta, Friar Odoric and Nicolo Conti. We now find the shadowy Eskimos and Greenlanders taking the place formerly held by Prester John and his fabled court. "Engroneland" (Greenland) is one of the provinces which (in the *Gargantua,* Chapter XXXIII.) Picrochole's advisers jauntily suggest that he annex; the name (spelled "Engroenland") occurs in the opening chapter of the romance of Perceforest, published at Paris in 1531; etc. While M. Plattard believes that the natives of the Island of Alliances, in Rabelais' Fourth Book—those weird "joiners" with the Ace-of-Clubs noses—are, in reality, none other than Eskimos or American Indians, and the island of Ennasin itself he would situate "somewhere in the vicinity of Greenland." This whole Fourth Book, indeed, as well as the posthumous Fifth Book, which is an inferior continuation, in large part by another hand, would not have been what it is without the influence of the new occidental exoticism; just

as the voyage of Pantagruel to the land of the Amaurots, in Book Second, is a reflection of the navigations of Diaz, Da Gama and others, the "Fairy Islands" there referred to (Book Second, Chapter XXIV.) being, according to M. Henri Clouzot, the Javanese archipelago, or the "*Insula Feminarum*," as Java then was called.

These are but straggling instances. At least one Gallic scholar, Professor Gilbert Chinard, has devoted a treatise to the subject. If we do not find actual Red Skins cantering through the pages of Rabelais, Des Periers and other writers of the period, it is for the reason that definite information necessary for a visualization was lacking, the literary creator being thus forced to rely solely upon his imagination. Glance at some of the fanciful old maps of the time, and something of the state of geographic knowledge, on the part even of professional geographers, becomes apparent. Look at the Planisphère Descelliers of 1550, preserved in the British Museum. It depicts, upon a map of the "New World," the Unicorns and Pygmies engaged in a warfare with the Pygmies' perpetual enemies, the cranes. And if French literature of the early half of the sixteenth century, prior to the Pléiade, has more or less of a *surréaliste* tinge as a whole, this is not alone due to the revival of the mediæval *fatrasie*, that hodge-podge of exuberances, of whimsies, fancies and conceits, the ancestor of the *coq-à-l'ane* of Marot and later writers. Rabelais did revive the *fatrasie;* and his romance and the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* have been seen as the two fountain-heads of modern French prose (much as Whitman and Poe have been made to stand for two divergent currents in our own literature): the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* with their simple narrative style; and Rabelais, that jovial deifier of

sound and fury, that Hurricane of Words, with the rhyme taking precedence over reason, and with the thought frequently dependent upon an end-pun or the tag of an idea, or else, as in the famous case between the Lords of Baysecul and Humevesne, kicked overboard with some deliberation. The form, as has been hinted, is an old one; delirious passages are to be found in the farce of *Patelin* and in the old French theatre generally. What Rabelais did was to make it, not merely his own expression, but the expression of his age.

After all, in a world where Unicorns and Pygmies stalked the map, was literature to remain a tame and stay-at-home affair? If one could not travel far physically, as distances nowadays go, there remained the lucky locomotion of the mind. A new theme had been found, to supersede in part the Hundred Cuckoldries of Louis XI. and his court—as Huysmans, in the nineteenth century, painfully sought one to replace the upholstered adulteries of the degenerate Zolaesque novel. Even if a writer did not directly utilize the new impulse in his work, the feeling, the breath, the spirit were there,—the feeling of undreamed marvels beyond that dark, foreboding ocean which it had taken Vespucci, according to his own account, forty-four days to cross, and around that significantly named Cape of Good Hope and up the stormy Indian sea to distant Cathay, which was a voyage not of days, but of months running into years.

Today, with the exception of the frozen poles, there are few lands left to dream of; yet a terrestrial globe or a *mappemonde* can still inspire the young Frenchman. The exotic impulse which began with the close of the fifteenth century, heightened by colonial expansion, has continued down through Chateaubriand to Paul Morand (*Rien que la*

Terre), Montherlant (*Les Voyageurs traqués*), and the latest young *Surréaliste* or the latest French journalist or super-journalist to leave our shores. Some, like Joseph Delteil, prefer to travel in imagination, their peregrinations ranging from Siberia to Shanghai, and from Shanghai to Texas. "I have never seen San Antonio," writes M. Delteil, "but I am going to describe it for you just the same." And that is what the writers of the sixteenth century were doing: describing it for us "just the same."

The map would appear to have held for Rabelais' contemporaries much the fascination that it has today, when, despite the lack of *terrae incognitae*, we hear young writers informing us that they are in the habit of working with a map of the world spread out before them on their writing-tables, that every morning they "take the world's pulse," and that their ambition is to walk around the world. (Can it be that, with the advent of the aeroplane, we are entering upon a last renaissance of geographic curiosity?) At any rate, the decades from 1500 to 1550 are a golden age of cosmographers and geographers. This was the age of Sebastian Münster, of Grynaeus of Basel, of Ramusio, Marco Polo's biographer, of Alfonse le Saintongeois, the Zeni brothers (see their navigator's map, posthumously published in 1558), of André Thevet, the author of a *Cosmographic Universalis* whose acquaintance Rabelais made at Rome, etc. Such works as the *Novus Orbis* of Grynæus and the *Navigationi e Viaggi* of Ramusio had a very direct influence upon creative writers, among them Rabelais. Professor Tilley has drawn attention to the fact that the route followed by Pantagruel's fleet, in Book Second, is the same as the itinerary of the Spaniards, sailing for the East Indies, as given in the

Novus Orbis; the ports of call follow in the same order, and the nomenclature is frequently the same; and Rabelais' geographic nomenclature as a whole is very largely taken from Ramusio and similar Italian sources. Older cosmographers, such as the fifteenth-century Aeneas Sylvius, and the narratives of travellers like Jehan Thenaud were also drawn upon.

But the writer's contact with this New Reality—for that was what it amounted to: a reality more marvellous-seeming than any dream—may sometimes have been a more vivid one than any to be attained through books. In such a work as Sir Thomas More's *Utopia,* we see the new impulse caught up in a more or less vague political super-realism that owes more to Plato than it does to Columbus. But in the case of Rabelais' Book Fourth, however fanciful it may read, one gets the impression of a tangible close-up reality behind it, an impression of fancy playing lightly over fact; and it is not impossible that the reason lies in a personal contact of some sort on the part of the author with his sources. It has been thought that Rabelais and Jacques Cartier may have met and talked, and that it may have been from the discoverer of Canada that Maître François picked up his seagoing terms, those terms which he employs with such freedom in the celebrated storm scene, and which have been the subject of so much wrangling on the part of naval and other authorities. Whether this be true or not, whether or not Rabelais and Cartier ever met in person—and Rabelais, after all, may have picked up his "terms" from some ordinary seaman in a pair of flowing breeches, of the kind that afford "greater comfort for the kidneys"—whatever the truth in the legend, the fact remains that Book Fourth is a reflection

of the search for the famous and elusive "northwest passage."

The map, the short of it is, had definitely taken its place in the literature of the modern world.

IV

It was not, however, merely the map of the globe, but the map of the heavens as well which was destined to be altered by the eager inquiring mind of this most remarkable of half-centuries. It was in 1530 that the Polish Copernicus published his *Commentariolus*, the first brief popular account of his revolutionary work on astronomy, the *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*, which was to see the light in 1543, and which was to attack the astronomic dictatorship of Ptolemy, even as the philosophic and dialectic dictatorship of Aristotle was being assailed in the schools, by men like Ramus and others. Copernicus had come back from a decade of student years at Bologna and Padua impregnated with the "Pythagorean" opinions, as they were known, of Domenico Maria Novara and other Italian thinkers. He had returned thoroughly convinced of the rightness of his heliocentric theory, based upon the principle of the relativity of motion.

Such a theory, subversive of old beliefs which, in the mob mind, had become ingrained, inseparably identified with the very body of religions thought, well might have shaken a world. As a matter of fact, the world went on much as before, despite the fact the public had been told that it "do move." The Copernican theory was slow in trickling through. This was partly due to certain anomalies inherent in the theory

"Abyss of Learning, a Man of Monstrous Fancy"

(The Most Authentic Extant Portrait of Rabelais. Musée de Versailles)

itself, a certain survival of the old epicyclical theorizings of Ptolemy, and partly to a traitorous soft-pedaling of Copernicus' achievement by Andreas Osiander. As the astronomer lay dying, at Frauenburg, of apoplexy and paralysis, a copy of his master work was rushed to him from the printer. Fortunately, unconsciousness already had set in, and Copernicus died without knowing anything about the anonymous preface which Osiander had interpolated, a preface insisting upon the purely hypothetical nature of the Copernican system. It was for Tycho Brahe, Kepler and Galileo to carry on his work, while Galileo, whose contributions were obvious and generally intelligible, was to reap in large part the laurels, in the century following.

We are not to be surprised, therefore, if, in the literature and thought of the age, a consciousness of the new heavens is not highly visible, being overshadowed as it was by the nearer reality of a new earth. It would be very pretty, by way of example, to go ahead and picture the Protestant Reformation as having been provoked by Copernicus. That would have made excellent copy for the school of Renaissance romanticizers. But chronology, unluckily, is not with us. It was in 1517 that Martin Luther tacked up his theses on the church door at Wittenberg, and it was but three years later that he made a bonfire of the canon law. The Reformation, as we shall see, in so far as it did not stem from the Revival of Learning (and the influence of the latter event in the case has, as we now know, been exaggerated), was essentially a revolt against the international *state* represented by the mediæval church; it was a revolt on the part of the governments of Europe against the papal monarchy and, like all the other seemingly sudden as well as revolu-

tionary events of the period, was the result of forces which, political in character, had been preparing for a very long time.

All this, so far as Copernicus and his discoveries are concerned, is but a part of the natural order of things. A man is usually more interested in an addition to the house in which he lives than he is in the aggrandizements of an empire to which he pays taxes.

At this point, it may be in order to pause for a general view of man's knowledge, in the first half of the sixteenth century, of "that other world which is man," as represented by the biological and medical sciences, and of the relation of that world to the macrocosm, represented by the pseudo-sciences, as some would call them, of alchemy and astrology; though it is to be noted that out of astrology modern astronomy was in some part being born—Tycho Brahe and Gassendi both began as astrologists, and Kepler as a youthful almanac-maker had predicted a hard winter which had actually come to pass—while as for alchemy, it, as so distinguished an authority as Liebig asserts, was "never at any time anything different from chemistry." Here, as elsewhere, what we discern is a gradual and natural process of evolution, rather than any sudden routing of mediæval powers of darkness, any violent tearing away of scholastic veils; the "dark ages" become always less dark as the light of scholarship is thrown upon them.

Take astrology. The sixteenth century, as M. Lazare Sainéan observes, was "the apogee of this pretended science"; and the same annotator goes on to point out that sceptics such as Rabelais (compare his *Almanacs* with Swift's *Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.*) were the exception rather than the rule,

It is true that, in the astrologizings of the epoch, we come upon much to provoke a laugh. There was the Italian mathematician and astrologer, Cardano, who hated Luther so that he changed the latter's birthday in order to be able to provide him with an unfavorable horoscope. There was Stöffler, who predicted a universal deluge for the year 1524, whereas what happened was, that year turned out to be as dry, almost, as the one in which Pantagruel was born. Yet President Aurial of Toulouse took the prophecy so seriously as to make Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* come true by building himself a Noah's Ark. Take-offs on these "prognostications coming out of Louvain" (Louvain being a city famous for its almanacs) were common at the time, and at least one of them, *La Grande et vraye Prognostication generale . . . par le grand Haly Habenragel*, is believed to have been composed shortly after the year 1481.

"So far as I can see," writes our own Maître François, in his *Almanac for the Year 1533*, "astrological prognostications are looked down upon by all men of learning, both on account of the silliness of those who have dealt with the subject, and on account of the failure each year of promises so made to come true. I shall, therefore, for the time being, refrain from telling you what I have found in the calculations of Cl. Ptolomaeus, etc., etc."

Here, we have the early Humanist speaking, in all the conscious superiority of his new-found enlightenment—a consciousness that sticks out somewhat like that of the tribe of current American "debunkers." And the debunker, then as now, found plenty of grist for his mill. Quacks and charlatans abounded; for those complementary species, the quack and the quack-chaser, are hardy perennials. Astrology, of

venerable lineage, frequently had degenerated into chiromancy and physiognomy; and Herr Trippa, who in real life was Henry Cornelius Agrippa, assures Panurge that "You have the metoposcope and the physiognomy of a cuckold." Men like Agrippa, with their endless string of "-omancies," were a fertile theme for satire. It is, however, a little too easy a thing to lapse into an undiscriminating contempt, the Humanist attitude fathering that of the Voltairean rationalist. If, a short while later, we hear Francis Bacon roundly abusing the astrologers of his day, it is, as Dr. Morris Jastrow remarks, for the reason that Sir Francis had visions of a reformed astrology and a reformed alchemy. Astronomancy may be a mediæval survival of Babylonian superstition, and one fit only to be toyed with by doddering Schoolmen; but if so, then it is one which Renaissance Humanism failed to slay, for it still has its respectable spokesmen. Dr. Richard Garnett insists that it is a "physical science just as much as geology," and Dr. Jastrow adds:

"Such a point of view is opposed to the generally established belief that astrology is either mere superstition or absolute imposture, and that its former vogue was due either to deception or to the tyranny of an unscientific environment. But if the progress of physical science has not prevented the rehabilitation of much of ancient alchemy by the later researches into chemical change, and if psychology now finds a place for explanations of spiritualism and witchcraft which involve the admission of the empirical facts under a new theory (as in the case of the divining-rod, etc.), it is at least conceivable that some new synthesis might once more justify part at all events of ancient and mediæval

astronomancy, to the extent of admitting the empirical facts where provable, and substituting for the supposed influence of the stars as such, some deeper theory which would be consistent with an application to other forms of prophecy, and thus might reconcile the possibility of dipping into futurity with certain interrelations of the universe, different indeed from those assumed by astrological theory, but underlying and explaining it."

With alchemy, the case is still clearer. The opinion of Baron Liebig already has been quoted. The modern chemist knows that alchemy was, simply, the chemistry of the middle ages. The probable etymology of the world itself indicates as much. Suppose we cast a backward glance over the history of alchemy. The word in its modern form is said to occur for the first time in a treatise of the fourth-century astrologist, Julius Firmicus, though the *al-* is probably the addition of a later copyist. The middle Greek form was *chemia*, which Suidas defines as "the preparation of silver and of gold." This does sound like the quest of the "philosopher's stone," the "elixir," etc. But a third-century Greek papyrus, found in a Theban tomb and preserved in the museum at Leiden, shows us that, in its origins, alchemy was but a phase of what we today would term applied chemistry. The papyrus in question is a collection of receipts for the combination of baser metals with alloys in a manner to simulate gold, and the results are to be used in the manufacture of imitation jewelry! If this be alchemy, in the pejorative sense in which the term is customarily employed, then our five-and-ten-cent-stores are full of the alchemist's art. This may have been one of those awful books "*peri chemias*

argyrou kai chrysou which Diocletian commanded to be burned. But let us hear what a modern engineering authority has to say on the subject:

"The author of these receipts is not under any delusions that he is transmuting metals; the Ms. is merely a workshop manual in which are described processes in daily use for preparing metals for false jewellery, but it argues considerable knowledge of methods of making alloys and colouring metals."

This from Mr. Hugh Munro Ross, editor of the *Times Engineering Supplement*. M. Berthelot, the author of a number of exhaustive volumes on the history of alchemy, goes on to point out what probably happened. These trade processes were a monopoly of the priestly caste, and as such were kept secret. The priestly artisans were aware, doubtless, that their products were not true gold, but they were more than willing to permit the public to think otherwise. In time, they came to believe themselves, and to believe that they really possessed the power of converting baser substances into gold. This self-delusion then became associated with the philosophic concept of the *prima materia*, and led to "Geber's kitchen" and to the speculations of Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon, Villanovanus, Vincent of Beauvais and all the subjects of La Quinte (Quintessence), in the land of Entelechy. For Humanist writers found, upon occasion, quite as lively a target in the alchemists as in the almanac-making astrologers. Here was another manifestation of "Gothic" darkness, coming in through the Arabic from such Saracen sources as Rhazes, Jaber and Avicenna. But once more, modern erudition steps in to readjust our view. The researches of M. Berthelot in connection with the manuscripts of Jaber and

the Latin works of Geber, who formerly had been identified with the Arabian alchemist, lead to a conclusion which tends to upset that put forward by the Roman historian Gibbon. Such criticism lessens the rôle of the Arabs, and shows western alchemy to have derived, rather, from the the Alexandrian Greeks. In other words, we have a throwback, not to the Saracens, but to the Humanists' own beloved antiquity. And this science, so deriving, remained all the time, in its essence, chemistry. It was Paracelsus who insisted upon the union of chemistry with medicine, becoming thereby the precursor of the iatrochemical school. As Dr. Jastrow has remarked above, contemporary science is by no means inimical to a rehabilitation in large part of the alchemist's ancient and, since the Renaissance, despised art.

No survey of the Renaissance period is complete without a consideration of the Medical Humanists, and the group is of particular interest in the present case for the reason that it was the one to which Rabelais belonged. These Humanist physicians had a gospel of their own, one which they preached and practised with ardour. That gospel was the necessity of substituting the authority of the Greeks, Hippocrates and Galen, and the Latin Celsus for that of the Arabians, who, since the eleventh century, had dominated western medicine. The Arabs, having overthrown the School of Salerno, which had ruled the early middle ages, were the great medical teachers of what is known as the Scholastic period. The worst feature of their influence was the infecting of medicine with an overdose of Aristotelian dialectic; but one sect, made up of the followers of Averroes, was noted for its independent thinking and for its addiction to empiricism. It was Jewish physicians, educated in the Moor-

ish schools of Spain and imbued with the principles of Averroes, who were chiefly responsible for the founding, early in the twelfth century, of the medical faculty at Montpellier, Rabelais' professional alma mater, and Montpellier became known for the practical trend of its teachings, in contrast with the dogmatism to be encountered in the universities at Paris and elsewhere. At the same time, in Italy, the schools of Bologna and Padua, the latter rather accentedly Averroist, the former more Galenical, were flourishing, and a certain general progress was being made in surgery and in anatomy.

Such was the state of medical science when the Revival of Learning came. A forward movement, as we have seen, had already been launched, in the persons of the Averroists, by those very forces of "barbarism" which the Humanists were soon to be combating. The latter hoped to lead medicine back to its Hellenic fountain-head, catching up en route the neglected Celsus. They stressed the necessity of fresh and accurate translations of the Greek medical classics, and Rabelais was one of those who lent himself to this task (see the dedication to his edition of Hippocrates and Galen). One of the beneficial results of the new movement, coming largely from Galen, was a revival of interest in anatomy. Dissection is practised, and Dr. François uses his scalpel upon the body of a hanged man, while his printer-friend, Étienne Dolet, congratulates—the corpse. This quickened interest in anatomy, by shedding inevitably a clearer light on physiological functions, was to lead up to Harvey's epoch-making discovery.

But the Medical Humanists had dreams vaster and more vague than all these. As in literature, philosophy and other

fields, the horizon seemed to them an unbounded one; and it was, possibly, this very vagueness of their dreams, their enthusiasms, that defeated the ends they should have achieved. Their reverence for the classics was an unreasoning one at times; but it cannot be denied that they drew from those works a certain revivifying energy. As one medical historian puts it: "The fatal habit of taking at second hand what should have been acquired by direct observation retarded progress more than the possession of better models assisted it, so that the fundamental faults of mediæval science remained uncorrected." As for Paracelsus, with his "microcosms" and "macrocosms," his indwelling Archeus, his therapeutic "arcana" and his "signatures," the outstanding result of his teachings, perhaps, was the introduction of laudanum and antimony. And in reading the works of so learned a physician as François Rabelais, one is struck by the persistence of much of the old mystical terminology, in talk of bodily "humours," "animal spirits," etc.

The medical science of the age brought with it certain benefits to botany. One of these was the impulse coming from the revival of Dioscorides and other classical naturalists. Botany is now done by botanizing, and there is, on the whole, a more thorough-going acquaintance with drugs and the uses to which they may be put. In a degree, the foundations of modern botany, as well as pharmacology, were being laid. This was partly due to the bringing in of new plants, from America and from the Far East. The leading botanists of the half-century we are considering were Brunfels, Fuchs, Hieronymus Bock and the English Turner; and we shall find Rabelais, who was something of an all-around scientist, winning distinction both as a lecturer and as a writer on the

subject. Something has been made, in connection with the Pantagruelion chapters at the close of Book Third, of Rabelais' observation of the sex in plants; but this was common knowledge with the ancients, and Maître François, as is common in country districts, confuses the two sexes. He also expends a deal of space, and apparently lays considerable stress upon the etymologizing of the names of plants.

As for zoology, it—modern zoology—has been said to have started with the sixteenth century. It appears, for a time, to have been little influenced by the medical studies which were being pursued in the universities, anatomy and physiology leaving it comparatively untouched. In the Italian schools, however, a new spirit of inquiry gradually became manifest and, half a century later, spread to Oxford. As for the writers of the day, they are to be found drawing upon Pliny, Aelian, Aristotle and the other often more than dubious ancients. True, there is a tendency to laugh at Pliny ("for I was never so self-assured a liar as he"). None the less, it is the *Historia Naturalis* and like works that are fallen back upon in a pinch. And yet, some advance there was over the mediæval period. The *Hortus Sanitatis* of Johann Cuba, published at Mainz in 1491, is, in reality, a summing up, a corpus of the zoological knowledge of the middle ages; and M. Sainéan, who has devoted a volume to Rabelais' natural history, draws attention to the gulf that separates this work from the descriptions to be found in the "Land of Velvet" chapter, in the posthumous Fifth Book. The author, we discover, places in this mythic tapestried realm not only all the fabled monsters of antiquity, but all those animals which in his day were unknown or extremely rare, including the elephant, the rhinoceros, the panther, etc., thus affording

us a diagram, practically, of the exotic fauna of his time. We have here an accuracy of observation and a certain empiric attitude which may be looked upon as harbingers of a more scientific method to come.

From this hasty view of the state of the natural sciences during the fifty years that coincide with Rabelais' lifetime, two points emerge. One is the fact that, in all the sciences from astronomy to medicine—with the possible exception of botany and zoology—there is to be observed a continuing unfoldment, rather than any brilliant burst of bloom. The second is the gradual introduction of the empirical method and attitude—that attitude and method which, though the men of the Renaissance did not sense it, contained the seed of Humanistic disintegration, if Humanism be regarded in its proper technical aspect as a devotion to the *litterae humaniores* of the pagan world.

No. In science, it is only the continued stirrings of life that we feel. It is when we come to architecture, sculpture, painting, music and the fine arts generally; it is when we glance at the arts of life: the arts of war and navigation, of costume, cookery and the rest; it is, above all, when we come to the art of literature that we approach the meaning of that term which has been so glibly fastened upon an era, by glib historians and a public avid of convenient name-handles; —it is then that we draw near the Renaissance.

V

Italy was, of course, the cradle of the Renaissance. The Italians, a precocious race, had been in a manner groomed for it by national heritage, and were impelled to it by the

outcome of events, chiefly, the Crusades. Up to 1453, Byzantium, with its synthesis of early-Christian and oriental influences, had, for centuries, been the art capital of the civilized world; and one old chronicler, Geoffroy de Villehardouin, has admirably described for us the effect which its treasures had upon the Latin invader, marching under the banner of Christianity. It is April of the year 1204, and the forces of the Fourth Crusade—that crusade which, as it turned out, was aimed at the schismatic Greeks, and which represented, politically, an attempt on the part of the Papacy to escape from lay domination and to reassert its old supremacy—have just entered Constantinople:

"Now, you may know that they looked long at Constantinople, those who never before had beheld it; for they were unable to believe that there could be in all the world a city so rich, as they viewed those high walls and those rich towers with which it was enclosed all round about, and those rich palaces and tall churches, of which there were more than anyone could have believed possible, had he not seen them with his own eyes, and the length and breadth of the city, which was a sovereign among all others. And you may know that there was not a man so bold that his flesh did not creep at the sight."

The effect must have been much the same as that which, centuries before, the sight of Latin civilization and its art-hoardings had produced upon the barbarian from the North. And these Christianized Latins displayed, indeed, much the same veneration for the accumulations of antiquity as the Goths and the Visigoths before them had manifested. Precious stones from the altar of St. Sophia were melted down to provide booty for the soldiery, vestments of gold and silver

were carted away by pack-trains of mules led into the churches, images of Christ and the saints were employed as footstools, and imperial tombs were violated, as priceless bronzes were cast into the furnace to be coined into sous. This, at least, is in accord with the chronicles, which add that, all the while, "an ungodly woman sang and danced upon the Patriarch's throne."

The depredations which the Crusaders wrought has been described by a native Greek, Nicetas Choniata, in strains which sound like the death-song of an Homeric hero:

"O City! light of all the cities, celebrated throughout the world, mother of Churches, centre of the arts and sciences . . . fecund mother, yesterday clad in the imperial purple, today clothed in sorry tatters and deprived of your children! You, who once sat upon a lofty throne, whose stride was superb, whose visage was august, whose stature magnificent, look how you are now humiliated and cast down; your precious vestments are torn, the light of your eyes is gone out!"

But as had happened before in history, the vanquished was to conquer the conqueror. Before Constantinople finally fell, in 1453, to rise no more, Italian pilgrims, men of letters and lovers of the arts, had come visiting its despoiled and desecrated shrines. It was, then, primarily as an art movement, as the result of a new and vital impulse in the plastic arts, that the Italian Renaissance set in. It is easy to talk much gibberish about the "ecclesiastical thraldom" from which the new art was an escape; but the fact is, it was a contact, through the Crusades, with the nothing if not ecclesiastic art of Byzantium which, as far back as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, had brought a new art spirit into

being, preparing the way for that reawakening to the models of pagan antiquity which was to lead to so gorgeous a flowering in the age of Michelangelo and Titian, Raphael and Da Vinci, Sansovino and Correggio—all that list which every reader of John Addington Symonds can recite by heart.—But what about the precursors—what about Cimabuë and Giotto, Donatello and Brunelleschi and the others?

As for the art of the "middle ages," we have of it today a view somewhat different from the one formerly held. We are now able to see that it was what it was for the reason that, socially, it had to be that and not something else. We now see the relations between the arts of sculpture and architecture and the Feudal organization of society, with sculpture *built into* city walls and, in Gothic architecture, becoming an integral part of the design.

The traditional view of Renaissance art, with an emphasis on "emancipation" and on a mystic "apocalypse," is set forth by Symonds:

"It is not so much an outcome of studies in antiquity as an exhibition of emancipated modern genius fired and illuminated by the masterpieces of the past. It indicates a separation from the middle ages, inasmuch as it is permanently natural. Its religion is joyous, sensuous, dramatic, terrible, but in each and all of its many-sided manifestations strictly human. . . . The art of the Renaissance was an apocalypse of the beauty of the world and man in unaffected spontaneity, without side thoughts for piety or erudition, inspired by pure delight in loveliness and harmony for their own sakes."

In any case, thanks to the enthusiasm of scholars and writers—for the plastic arts of the age owed no small debt to literature—thanks also to the generosity of the Italian

princes, the marbles of the past were collected along with classic codices, and museums sprang up beside libraries. From Italy, the impulse was to spread, a little later and in the field of painting in particular, to Germany, to the Low Countries and to Spain (in speaking of painting, we may leave France and England out of the picture), with such figures as Dürer and Holbein, Van Dyck, Rubens, Rembrandt and Velazquez dominating the creative landscape.

The artistic movement, as has just been remarked, had its literary point of contact. It was the archæologic and collector's passion of such men as the fourteenth-century Petrarch and Boccaccio—Petrarch, who collected everything from coins to libraries—that stimulated the bringing together of art treasures and the utilization of these as living models, even as the newly unearthed Greek and Latin writers were to be brought into use as models of literary composition. It is Petrarch who is commonly alluded to as the Father of Humanism and the Instigator of the Renaissance, and that day, near the beginning of the year 1345, when the manuscript of Cicero's *Familiar Letters* was brought to light at Verona is looked upon as a red-letter day in scholarship. In point of animating spirit, Laura's lover doubtless deserved the attribution, for he was a superb publicist; but so far as the actual popularization of the new Hellenism was concerned, the rôle of his contemporary, Boccaccio, was by far the more active one. Petrarch, we are to remember, was never able to read Greek, and drew his knowledge of the *Iliad* from his friend, Boccaccio's, rough Latin draft. Boccaccio it was who, upon searching out the library of the Monte Cassino monastery, found the monks making psalters

for children and penny amulets for old women out of the manuscripts there preserved.

Here, in this incident, we have the confrontation of the old order and the new: the man of the new old-learning, forerunner of Budé and Erasmus, Reuchlin and Sir Thomas More, righteously and indignantly facing a world of Friar Johns, with whom everything is "a matter of breviary." And we are later to see young François Rabelais and his cloistral companion, Pierre Amy, fighting the same fight over their beloved Greek books. It was Boccaccio, too, who introduced that erudite adventurer, Leontius Pilatus, or Leone Pilato, to Petrarch, and who was responsible for the appointment of Pilatus to the professorship of Greek at Florence, the first chair of Greek in Italy. In addition, the author of the *Decameron* bought manuscripts, and copied enough of them out with his own hand to amaze a professional copyist.

Both Boccaccio and Petrarch came in the fourteenth century—Petrarch dying in 1374 and Boccaccio one year later—or a good seventy-five years before the date, 1453, which historians of "the Renaissance," vague as they are inclined to be, on the whole, in the matter of chronology, ordinarily fix as the beginning of the world's apocalyptic Rebirth. As for Petrarch, his ideals have been well summed up by Symonds in the terms "self-culture" and "self-effectuation." There was in him no trace of any break with Christianity, no consciousness of the need for such a break. In his dream of culture and a retired, scholarly and unworldly life, he stemmed from the old Roman gentleman type, whether that gentleman be Horace, Martial or Cicero's friend, Atticus; but in his religious thinking, he remained a devout ad-

mirer of Dante and a disciple of St. Augustine. In the creative work by which he lives, the *Canzoniere*, he is found to be continuing a mediæval—Provençal—tradition; just as the *Decameron* is a continuation of the *fabliaux*. And Boccaccio was Dante's biographer and commentator.

Both of these writers, aside from the creative stature of the works they left behind them, did much for Italian and for modern literature through the employment they made of the vernacular; but in this they had been preceded by Dante; and they themselves were to become the inaugurators of a pedantic tradition against which, a couple of centuries later, we find a writer like Aretino in revolt.

Following in the footsteps of these pioneers came other collectors of manuscripts and hoarders of antiquity: Guarino; Filelfo; Aurispa; Poggio; etc. A barren period now set in; barren, so far as the quality of literary production was concerned, but a fruitful one for the advancement of learning. Scholarship, in truth, seemed so much more important than creation for the moment; it was the business in hand. This was the era of Pontanus' *Elegies*,—that "Pontanus, the secular poet," at whom Rabelais, in the person of Master Janotus de Bragmardo, has a good laugh, and who had "the chronic in the tripes of his brain when he was composing his carminiform verses." It was the era of Politian, hexametrist and Homeric commentator, who, as an annotator, was accused of plagiarism by Rabelais and Budé. It was the age of annalists like Poggio, who tried to write like Livy, and of essayists like Laurentius Valla, who painfully imitated the *Tusculan Disputations* of Cicero. Nor should we overlook a macaronic writer like Folengo, on

whose *Il Baldo* (the *Opus Macaronicum*) Rabelais undoubtedly drew, though such debts are not to be unduly magnified.

But scholarship was eventually, by indicating the path of return to a native poetry, to prepare the way for a literature that had in it a little more vitality. Pulci, Boiardo and Ariosto were to come, and Machiavelli, Aretino and others. Like Folengo (or Merlinus Cocaius, as he was more popularly known), Pulci with his epic, the *Morgante Maggiore*, has been seen as another of Rabelais' sources. For Italian literature was to fertilize, in large degree, the literature of Europe, as the influence of Italian life and manners crept over the royal courts and filtered downward through the lower social strata, affecting to an appreciable extent the habits and the mode of thought of a continent. In England, at furthest remove from the source, we have, following Wycliffe and Chaucer and alongside the Humanist scholars, Colet, Ascham and More, such distinctly "Italianizing" writers as Wyatt and Surrey and, just beyond the span of Rabelais' lifetime, Edmund Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney; the sonnet and terza rima had been acclimated in our language. Great modern literatures are heaving in sight, with Camoëns and Cervantes looming above the Iberic horizon, with the Faust legend soon to spring up out of the old Volksbücher, and with Shakespeare only a short distance in the offing. While in France, we encounter Rabelais, Des Periers, Pasquier, Marot, with Ronsard and the Pléiade, Brantôme, Montaigne and Regnier all close up.

Translation naturally played an important rôle in the spread of the new learning and the fostering of the new literature: translations from the Greek and Latin classics,

translations of the Bible, and translations from neighbouring literatures. The fifteenth century has been called the golden age of translation, with the Tyndale and Cloverdale Bibles, following the Wyckliffe version of the century preceding, and with Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. The sixteenth is almost if not quite as brilliant, with Luther's German Bible (1522–1534), with Jacques Amyot and his *Plutarch*, that "prince of translators," to whom Montaigne would "give the palm," with Nicolas de Herberay delighting Henry II.'s court with his *Amadis de Gaule*, with the British Lord Berners and his Froissart, etc. And less than twenty years after his death, Rabelais himself was to find a translator at the hands of the German Fischart.

It is not strange, therefore, that the hero of this biography should have served a double apprenticeship: as a translator and as an editor and reviser of the old mediæval tales of chivalry (with Petrarch, he may have turned a hand to the *Pierre de Provence*, among others), the latter constituting a literature which already had become a subject for zest as it would not have been a hundred years before, and one which was to be given a last annihilating dose of laughter by Don Quixote and his squire.

While their writings may not be primarily or distinctly literary in character, there is to be found in each country, during the years under consideration here, a more or less general group of Humanistic thinkers, made up of scholars, theologians, scientists, philosophers and religious and educational reformers. In Germany, there are Reuchlin, Melanchthon, Luther and Ulrich Von Hutten. In France: Turnebus, the patriarchal Hellenist, Budé, Dolet, the Scaligers, Calvin, and Pierre Ramus, Aristotle's belated enemy.

In England, in addition to More and others who have been mentioned, such distinguished classicists as Sir John Cheke. In Italy, following the famous Pico della Mirandola and his 900 omniverous theses: Hieronimo Cardano, whose place in the revival of science is an important one.

But these were all men who leaned rather to thought than to creative expression; and this brings us to the question: What was the burden of Humanist thought? What was the Humanist gospel? For as will be seen, the fervent disciples of the New Learning made a gospel of it.

VI

The modern conception of the Renaissance, in the popular mind at any rate, probably is derived very largely from John Addington Symonds, certainly from writers such as Symonds. It may be well, accordingly, to let this spokesman be heard: Speaking of the Revival of Learning, he has this to say:

"That rediscovery of the classic past restored the confidence in their own faculties to men striving after spiritual freedom; revealed the continuity of history and the identity of human nature in spite of diverse creeds and different customs; held up for emulation master works of literature, philosophy and art; shattered the narrow mental barriers imposed by mediæval orthodoxy."

As for Humanism:

"Humanism . . . denotes a specific bias which the forces liberated in the Renaissance took from contact with the ancient world—the particular form assumed by human self-esteem at that epoch—the ideal of life and civilization

evolved by modern nations. It indicates the endeavour of man to reconstitute himself as a free being, not as the thrall of theological despotism, and the peculiar assistance he derived in this effort from Greek and Roman literature, the *litterae humaniores*, letters leaning rather to the side of man than of divinity."

And again:

"The Renaissance will be considered as implying a comprehensive movement of the European intellect and will toward self-emancipation, toward reassertion of the natural rights of the reason and the senses, toward the conquest of this planet as a place of human occupation, and toward the formation of regulative theories both for states and individuals differing from those of mediæval times. The Revival of Learning will be treated as a decisive factor in this process of evolution on a new plan."

One notes, running through all this, the words "freedom," "self-emancipation," "mental barriers," "theological thraldom," "rights of reason and the senses," etc. Man is to be, henceforth, a free and reasoning being, and thus is to be automatically elevated to a new and conscious dignity:

"For humanism, which was the vital element in the Revival of Learning, consists mainly of a just perception of the dignity of man as a rational, volitional and sentient being, born upon this earth with a right to use and enjoy it. Humanism . . . involved a vivid recognition of the goodliness of man and nature, displayed in the great monuments of human power, recovered from the past."

Ah, there we have it! The heart of the doctrine, the true substantific marrow of the Humanist bone. A page from an optimist's creed. What we have here is, really, the doctrine

of the perfectibility of man, and it is this credo which underlies that fanciful realization of a monk's dream—a monk who has kicked off the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience—in Rabelais' Abbey of Thélème, with its admonitory inscription: FAY CE QUE VOULDRAS:

"Do what you will, for the reason that those who are free-born and well-born, well brought up and used to decent society, possess by nature a certain instinct and spur which always impels them to virtuous deeds and restrains them from vice, an instinct which is the thing called honour."

What Gargantua and Friar John are founding is, in other words, a moral aristocracy, an aristocracy based upon the same principle as that to be discovered in the mediæval romances of chivalry, the same principle which, a century later, was to inspire the concept of "*l'honnête homme.*" This is the question which, under the form of free will versus predestination, was to be fought out by the Protestant Reformationists. There is nothing startlingly new in the theory; if an origin of the dogma of honour is sought, the source will be found back in the contemned "Gothic" age, and will be found to be essentially Christian in genesis. Nevertheless, this belief was to grow, in the eighteenth century, to redoubtable proportions. As it is, that "rights of the reason and of the senses" all sounds very Voltairean and French-revolutionary. From that "free born, well born," etc., to the *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* of the late 1700's is not so far a step; since where is your free-born citizen who will not claim the privileges of the well-born? Today, even those who still call themselves Humanists, and who look upon themselves as the descendants lineal of the men of the six-

teenth century, are compelled to smile a little at Rabelais' "optimism." M. Plattard remarks:

"That constraint impels to revolt even those whose natural tendency is to virtue is a fact of experience. But that human nature instinctively tends to good is an article of faith . . . which admits of no sort of demonstration."

As to the freedom of man and his dignity, Dr. Freud might have something to say as to the latter, while our behaviouristic psychologists would strenuously deny the former.

Yet, the Symonds statement, however old-fashioned reading it may make, is a fairly accurate one, as may be seen from a comparision of it with the writings of the early Humanists themselves. What later historians have done has been to give a rhetorical synthesis to the scattered aims and aspirations of an age, to those dreams and visions which found expression only now and then and only in part, and which the dreamers, from being too close up, were unable to weld into an eloquent whole.

Such was the wine, and none other, with which the men of the Renaissance were drunk. For there is no drunkenness like the drunkenness of horizons, even though the prospect that appears to be opening to our view may be no more than a mirage. We who live in what may be as yet no more than the dawn of the Machine Age sometimes feel a similar vertigo; though the vision that comes to us may be, to the sensitive, more of a nightmare than a dream: a vision of mechanical robots performing the functions of humankind, even to the point of a laboratory reproduction of the species. And how short a while back it seems that some of us were talking about the emancipation and the refinement of daily

living which the machine was to confer! For our sixteenth-century Humanist, the vista was a more charming one. If life did not always hold for him a winey taste—with the prospect any moment of having to pay for his spree, like Étienne Dolet, at the stake—the wine at least was a convenient and a universally understood symbol, as well as one drawn from the depths of a respected classic antiquity. It was, moreover, like the student's stein-song and the tippler's vinous troll, one in itself slightly drunkenness-inspiring.

When one is drunk, one not uncommonly sees things, and our Humanist friend was no exception. He saw, or thought he saw, though he soon discovered his mistake, at once a harvest and an implement of the New Freedom in the Protestant Reformation.

VII

Our view of the Reformation—or the Protestant Revolt, as we now perceive that it would be more accurate to term it—has changed very markedly since the days of the old school history, in which the advent of John Tetzel and his bag of indulgences was effectively pictured, by Protestant history-writers for Protestant youth, as the last straw of mediæval and ecclesiastic ignorance and oppression. Owing to the labours of both Catholic and Protestant historians, as well as those without any determining bias, your period-specialist of today will be heard telling us that the Reformation, in its geneses, was a purely secular and political manifestation, and that in so far as the overthrow of dogma was striven for, this was by way of bringing about political

relief. Among such authorities may be cited Mr. H. C. Lea of the *Cambridge Modern History*, and in America, Prof. James Harvey Robinson.

"We now appreciate," says the latter writer, "too thoroughly the intricacy of the mediæval church; its vast range of activity, secular as well as religious; the inextricable interweaving of the civil and ecclesiastical governments; the slow and painful process of their divorce as the old ideas of the proper functions of the two institutions have changed in both Protestant and Catholic lands: we perceive all too clearly the limitations of the reformers, their distrust of reason and criticism—in short, we know too much about mediæval institutions and the process of their disintegration longer to see in the Reformation an abrupt break in the general history of Europe. . . . It would perhaps be nearer the truth to say that the secular and spiritual interests intermingled and so permeated one another that it is almost impossible to distinguish them clearly even in thought, while in practice they were so bewilderingly confused that they were never separated and were constantly mistaken for one another."

The Reformation, as Prof. Robinson goes on to point out, was in reality a revolt against that idea of the *ecclesia* which goes back to Apostolic days. Maitland has shown how the church perfectly fulfils any definition that may be given of the state, even to the point, in the thirteenth century, of pronouncing sentence of death. And for more than a century and a half, from the Diet of Augsburg to the League of Augsburg, or from 1530 to 1688–9, which takes us through the English Revolution, the Reformation in Europe was to preserve this political character. Luther, students have

pointed out, in his *Address to the German Nobility*, first attacks the Church as a source of worldly disorder; while this attitude, reflected in the *Gravamina* of the German Diets, becomes still clearer in such a Reformation writer as Ulrich von Hutten.

It is now evident that there was nothing new in Luther's position as a Reformer, that he had been antedated in this by Hildegard of Bingen and by Walther von der Vogelweide, the latter coming more than three hundred years before. Even the new spirit of devotion is not new. A quiet-going, painstaking parish priest, the Bohemian Hasak, has accomplished this latter reversal of view, through the simple process of bringing together the devotional works which appeared during the seventy years preceding the invention of printing. At least one of these, the *German Theology*, was a favourite with Luther. Catholic historians, indeed, have done much, and their work, too greatly neglected in the past, is only beginning to tell. The researches of Hasak and others provided the impetus for Janssen and his monumental work on the German church before Luther's secession; and Janssen's work is now being carried on in a series of learned monographs.

Luther's formal repudiation of the papal government came in 1520—it was in that year that he burned what up to that time had been looked upon as the *jus commune*, or common law of Europe. Within a generation, the revolt had spread to England, Scotland, Scandinavia, Switzerland, North Germany and the Netherlands, that revolt which was to produce the ugliest form of civilization that the world has known. In England, the political character is clearly apparent, with Henry VIII., his wives, his divorces

and his ecclesiastical schisms; and it could easily be shown that the same character prevailed in the other countries mentioned. What concerns us here, however, is rather the relation of the Reformation to the Revival of Classical Learning and the attitude of the Humanists, including François Rabelais, to the nascent revolt.

The old idea of the Reformation coming as the result of the Revival of Learning fitted in admirably with that picture of Tetzel and his indulgences. But unfortunately once more, the Reformation had about as little to do with the Revival of Learning as it did with the discoveries of Galileo, which came some while after the Lutheran split. The two movements grazed each other in the beginning, and at times overlapped, but, on the whole, did little more than that. It is not strange if, being close up, the issues should have been sometimes confused; but the types of mind involved were soon to discover that they were radically different. The definitive divergence was to come with the development of the Lutheran doctrine of depravity and its denial of free will, and with John Calvin and the other "predestinators," as Rabelais with bitter sarcasm dubs them. The Reformers' renunciation of the moral freedom of the individual was fundamentally opposed to the Humanists' more optimistic creed; and down through the succeeding centuries, Humanism and Reform were to pursue parallel, occasionally intersecting, paths, to be caught up and given something of a pedagogic amalgamation in British and American educational systems, with a long lifeless cult to once living humanities as a memorial of the days when men spoke in the same breath of the finding of a new Greek codex and a new "reform" in the church.

As for the Humanists themselves, they were most of them members of the clergy, and anticlericalism was a rare manifestation among them. Erasmus, as is well known, had a horror of anything bordering on open revolt. And Rabelais, if we put aside the posthumous Fifth Book, which has small chance of being his, while he may be seen as a nationalistic Catholic, hardly can be said to define an anti-clerical position; though it was the possibility he thought he glimpsed of finding in Maître François a forerunner of his own anticlericalism that led Voltaire to take up the "buffoon" he formerly had despised. The Church, as the records will show, appeared as the patron of the Newer Learning, with Popes like Leo X., Nicholas V. and others doing all they could to foster the movement. So far as religion was concerned, there was to be found in the ranks of the Humanists every type of mind from the ardent mystic and the pietist to the jovial indifferentist. There was, it is true, a certain "higher criticism" afoot (Laurentius Valla is a prominent example), and a part of this criticism was directed at the old Scholasticism. But the attack here had begun as far back as that *mirabilis doctor*, Roger Bacon. The Humanists also criticized, when they did not laugh at, the friars and the institution of "monkdom," and the operations of the Roman Curia.

It may be of particular interest to note here the attitude of the advocates of the New Learning toward monasticism and its exponents. That attitude was more likely than not to be a jocund one, inasmuch as a goodly number of the Humanists had, at one time or another, worn a frock and, like Friar John, had sometimes left a little wool behind them in leaping the ecclesiastic hedges. Friar John has

been pronounced to be a perfect portrait of the average monk—the *moine moyen sensuel*—of his day; yet I, for one, cannot think that Rabelais held any deep animosity for this creature of his imagination, who was by no means "of imagination all compact." But read some of Rabelais' commentators a century or two later, the Abbé de Marsy, Le Duchat and other rabidly Protestant annotators—De Marsy had been a Jesuit once—and note the wealth of bitterness which these men read into every least allusion to the monastic life.

"Rabelais," says De Marsy, "had quite another object than satirizing an individual. It is a society, or rather, an aggregation of societies that he is concerned with. It is monks in general whom he attacks, whom he wishes to ridicule and to depict as despicable and odious; it is the monastic state the foundations of which he desires to sap. With this in view, he brings upon the scene a drunken and debauched monk . . . vices, according to Rabelais, essentially . . . inherent in the monk's frock. Friar John himself, the truth is, seizes every opportunity to exalt the virtues of his cloth as a means of sharpening the appetite, exciting the thirst or providing a bait for libertinism. . . . Rabelais deals the rudest blows to the monastic state, and what he has to say manifestly tends to the total extinction of religious societies. Under the specious pretext of founding an abbey for the Friar, he indirectly attacks the three vows which constitute the essence of every monastic society. If one attempts to correlate the various remarks lightly strewn throughout the *Gargantua*, apparently without design, one discovers a unified system that is closely adhered to, the object of which, as I have said, is to vilify and discredit, and even totally

to overthrow the monastic institution. Now, in order to come at this end, Rabelais could have thought of nothing better than the creation of a character like Friar John, who affords a target for all the raillery to which monks are subjected, and who slanders his own kind more than do Gargantua, Eudemon and all the others. And so, do not seek anything in Friar John other than Friar John himself, *a true monk*, Rabelais tell us, *if ever there was one since this monking world monked a monkery*. . . . A secret partisan of Luther, he (Rabelais) thought as the latter did on the subject of monks, and speaks as he thought. And so, one is not to be surprised at the burlesque features with which he smears their portraits. . . . Rabelais, in his youth, had lived familiarly with these monks, whose manners were not any more austere than his own were at that time."

And Voltaire, naturally, is to be found agreeing with De Marsy.

The modern scholar's views are somewhat different:

"All these characteristics" (observes M. Plattard), "these gross instincts and vulgar manners we may find in those portraits of the monks which the preachers and the Humanists have given us in their invectives. But whereas Erasmus, Cornelius Agrippa, Ulrich von Hutton and the Reformationists grew indignant over the ignorance, the gluttony and the filthy habits of the monks, Rabelais was amused by all this. . . . The one thing he (Rabelais) could not forgive in the monks was their idleness. . . . If Friar John . . . is 'welcome in any company,' it is because he 'works' and because he 'labours'."

(For *activity*, according to M. Plattard, is the keynote to Friar John's character.)

The Humanists, it may be seen, did not always agree among themselves on such questions. Another difference in attitude, between Rabelais and Erasmus, is to be seen in connection with asceticism. After pointing out that Rabelais' Abbey of Thélème is the result of the author's basic naturalistic philosophy, his sense of life, M. Plattard has this to say:

"The ascetic regime, which is part of the very institution of monasticism, is as contrary to Rabelais' temperament as it was to the mind of Erasmus. The latter, in the *Praise of Folly*, had ridiculed the Judaic practices of the monks. . . . Thus, for Erasmus, the monastic rule is a nonsensical one, for the reason that it has nothing in common with the law of Christian brotherhood. As for Rabelais, he condemns it in the name of Nature's law. Monastic asceticism is contrary to his very sense of life."

The Humanists, too, will often be found agreeing, in their attacks on this or that phase of religion, with the orthodox pulpiteers of the time. A case in point is the subject of pilgrimages and their abuse, which provides Rabelais with a theme in the *Gargantua.*

Occasionally, a question or a controversy would arise touching on both Humanism and the new Reform which would provide the disciples of enlightenment with quite too good an opportunity to be overlooked. Such a case was the Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn row in Germany, which gave rise to the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, a dog-Latin satire that is one of the merriest ever composed. Pfefferkorn, a converted Jew—"a rascally Jew turned most rascally of Christians" was Erasmus' description—was bent, in the name of his new-found Christianity, upon depriving the heathen members of his race of their religious books. In this, he had

the backing of the reactionary Dominicans of Cologne; and it has also been hinted that Pfefferkorn had in mind selling the books back to his unconverted brethren at a slight increase in price. Whatever his motives, he succeeded in starting a controversy which was soon raging all over Europe; and in this, Reuchlin, leader of Teutonic Humanism, felt called upon to take a part. As the spokesman of the liberal-minded, Reuchlin received letters from sympathizers everywhere, and these he published in a collection entitled *Epistolae Clarorum Virorum*, or *Letters of Famous Men*, which gave Ulrich von Hutton and Crotus Rubianus the idea for their more or less immortal take-off.

This affair throws no small light on the illusions which the early Humanists entertained regarding the Reformation and its possibilities in the direction of human freedom. It was some such belief as this, there can be no doubt of it, which at the first attracted Rabelais, whose philosophy had in it no little of Epicurus, tempered by Zeno and provided with a metaphysic by Hermes Trismegistus. In the earlier portion of his writing career, before his "Pantagruelism," since so garbled, had come to signify "a moral doctrine that implies a constant elevation and breadth of soul" (the words are Professor Lefranc's)—in these earlier years, it would seem that Epicurus predominated; and it is significant that Rabelais, who writes up over his Thélème the inscription FAY CE QUE VOULDRAS, should have made a place in this convent of Epicureans for the followers of the new religious Reform:

And enter here all you who preach and teach
The living Gospel, though the heathen raves:

You'll find a refuge here beyond their reach,
Against the hostile error you impeach,
Which through the world spreads poison, and depraves;
Come in, for here we found a faith that saves;
By voice and letter, let's confound the herd

Of enemies of God's own Holy Word.
The word of grace
We'll not efface
From this holy place;
Let each embrace,
And himself enlace
With the Word of Grace.

"Rabelais," as M. Plattard once more commentates, "did not foresee the divorce that was soon to occur between the Humanists and the Reformationists. He did not suspect, as yet, that some of the latter, whom he, with reason, looked upon as his allies in the struggle against 'Gothic' tradition, would find reprehensible this Epicurean existence to which he so generously invites them."

The *Gargantua* as a whole has a distinctly Protestant tone; one reading only this book might be convinced that Rabelais *was* a Protestant. This leaning is to be seen in the education which Ponocrates gives his young giant pupil—in the abolition of beads and masses, and in the direct adoration of the Divinity, without the intercession of the Saints. It is to be seen in that private "*chapelle*" which each member of the Thélème colony is to have at his disposal. And the feeling attains a truly moving intensity at the conclusion of Chapter XXIII.:

As the night wore on, before retiring, they would go to

the most open place in the house, in order to have a look at the sky and make note of the comets, if any there were, and of the figuration, situation, aspect, oppositions and conjunctions of the heavenly bodies.

At this time, with his teacher, in the manner of the Pythagoreans, Gargantua would repeat briefly all that he had read, seen, learned, done and heard in the course of the day. Praying God their Creator, adoring Him, reaffirming their faith in Him, glorifying Him for His immense goodness and rendering thanks to Him for all time past, they would commend themselves to His divine clemency for all time to come. This done, they would seek their repose."

Upon reading such a passage as the one just quoted (and there are a number of similar ones to be found in Rabelais' work) it is a bit hard to see how anyone could look upon the author as an out-and-out atheist. All this, however—the question of Rabelais' real spiritual views, his orthodoxy or unorthodoxy, his "secret doctrine" and the true "substantific marrow" of his works—will be gone into later. For the present, it may merely be noted that it is neither the atheist nor the ordinary Catholic of the day who is speaking here. It is, rather, a man who believes that he has just discovered a Great Light, and who, even in a jesting romance, is bent upon passing it on to others. And in Rabelais' case, there was a personal reason which lent some weight, as personal reasons not infrequently do. That reason was the fact that his *Pantagruel* (Book Second) had recently been censored—"suppressed," as we would say—by the Theological Faculty of the Sorbonne.

Like the other Humanists, Rabelais was soon to learn

that the new light was not light but darkness. And Calvin and the other Reformationists, on their side, were to discover that these men whom they had regarded as cause-brothers were, when all veils were lifted, their irreconciliable foes. Calvin's word is slightly famous—I quote from Theodore de Bèze's reprint of the Geneva, 1550, edition of the *De Scandalis:*

"Everyone knows that Agrippa, Villanovanus, Dolet and their kind have always headstrongly contemned the Gospel. Others, like Rabelais, Desperiers and many more whom I for the present will not name, after having tasted of the Gospel, have been struck with a similar blindness."

This is only one of a number of attacks on Rabelais to be found in the utterances of Calvin. (See, for example, the third sermon on the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy.) And Calvin was not the only one among the Reformers to sight the Humanist adversary. In his *Apologie pour Hérodote*, Henri Estienne tells us that "Although Rabelais seems to be one of us, he often casts stones into our garden." As for the relations between Rabelais and Calvin, they constitute an essential part of the Rabelaisian biography, and will be dealt with at the proper time. What is desired here is to call attention to the early and mutual misconception of aims on the part of the two camps, followed by a growing suspicion on each side and an ultimate and irreparable breach. What happened may be taken in at a glance by reading, first that chapter-end of the *Gargantua* which has been quoted, and then, Rabelais' envenomed reference to "the maniacal Pistolets, the demoniacal Calvins, those impostors of Geneva," at the conclusion of Book Fourth, Chapter XXXII. Something, obviously, had happened, and that

something is a part, not only of Rabelais' biography, but of the history of the Renaissance-Reformation period.

But contacts, however impermanent, ordinarily leave some sort of mark. One of the things which the Humanists took from the Reformationists was a taint of the new Pauline theology, as is evident in the writings of Erasmus, Colet, Lefèvre d'Etaples and others. This influence is to be seen in Rabelais' devotion to "the good Apostle, St. Paul," as well as in his fondness for a "good evangelic preacher." But by the year 1542, this fondness would seem to have worn off somewhat, for in that year, in revising his *Pantagruel* for the press, we find him taking the trouble to write into the Prologue, beside the epithets "slanderers," "impostors" and "seducers," the damning one of predestinators."

VIII

Denied any satisfying outlet in religion, the new Humanism—in its Italian origins, an exclusively literary and artistic phenomenon—was to find an expression in efforts aimed at educational reform. This advocated reform was in the nature of a revolt against the old Scholasticism and its pedagogic off-shoots. Here again, there was much ado about the New Light, without, always, the ability at least to see what was illuminating in the old. It is on this note that Rabelais' latest and most comprehensive Gallic biographer begins his task:

"However little acquaintance one may have with the men of letters of the first half of the sixteenth century, one cannot but be struck by the disdain which these latter affect for the whole body of artistic and intellectual production of the

Middle Ages. No generation in our literary history would appear to be possessed of a greater pride in its originality than that of the Renaissance. It would seem that, previous to it, all had been but ignorance, and that the shadows of what our Humanists are in the habit of terming the 'Gothic night' had lain over France up to the very threshold of their century. If they exhibit so much contempt for mediæval culture, it is for the reason that the majority of them were familiar with that culture only through school-room teachings. Arrived at the age of adolescence, they were all greatly taken with Greek and Latin literature, which the labours of scholars, translators, poets and artists had of late rendered accessible to them. Compared to 'humane letters', to the poetry, eloquence and philosophy of the Ancients, what, in their eyes, was that scholastic philosophy worth, the creators of which, a St. Thomas Aquinas, an Alexander of Hales, a St. Bonaventura, a Duns Scotus, are for us the glory of an age! They possessed of the doctrine of these men only a degraded, shrunken, deformed idea, the one which their schoolmasters had given them. That doctrine called up in their minds only painful memories of their early years at school, a schooling so diametrically opposed to that which the new culture outlined for them!"

The situation could not have been more happily or more concisely put than this. And so, we shall not be astonished to find the Humanists—ruled as they very largely are by personal likings and dislikings that have their roots deep in personal experience—quite frequently disagreeing among themselves as to what constitutes an enlightened education and what are the best tools for the process of achieving

such an education. An instance of this is in connection with those old-fashioned school-texts which furnish such excellent material for laughter. Read, in the *Gargantua*, the chapter entitled "How Gargantua Was Instructed by a Sophist in Latin Literature" (early editions have "by a Theologian"). You will find them all there, from the *De Modis Significandi*, a work which, Erasmus informs us, made dunces of the youth of his day, to the *De Moribus in Mensa Servandis*, a treatise on table manners, and the *Facetus*, which admonished little boys not to wipe their mouths on the table-cloth and not to pick their noses while eating. Yet Erasmus saw a value in the *De Moribus*, as he did in the *Donatus*, which is one of the young Gargantua's texts presumably being satirized by Rabelais. On the other hand, Rabelais and Erasmus would have agreed in condemning the *Mamotrectus*, a work for the religious upbringing of the young. And so it went. Rabelais is a good deal more sweeping than the other Humanists. The latter were willing, to a degree, to compromise with tradition, with the object of orientating it toward a new ideal. Not Rabelais, the artist. He needs contrast for his picture; so he blocks it in with blacks and whites.

But Rabelais was, none the less, something of an educator as well as an artist. Has not the pompous Guizot alluded to him as "one of those who have thought and spoken most clearly on the subject of education, prior to Locke and Rousseau"? And at least one ponderous German thesis has been published on the same subject. Rabelais' educational ideas and ideals will be found outlined in the old and the new training which is given the young Gargantua, while Gargantua's letter to his son in the eighth chapter of the

first book of the *Pantagruel* is the summing up of the pedagogic ideals of an age—Prof. Lefranc has described this chapter as "the most ardent hymn ever composed to the glory of the Renaissance." But all this, likewise, is more or less a part of Rabelais' personal and spiritual history. No more will be attempted here than the extraction of a few general ideas.

The new system, it may be remarked, as exemplified by Ponocrates, is a realistic one: it is one that has its roots in life, and which is to be marked by a combination of physical, intellectual and moral culture (whereas the physical side was commonly denied by the Humanists). It is such an education as is to be given "a true king of the Renaissance," being a combination of that of the gentleman, which had been wholly physical, and the *clerc*, or scholar. In this, a strong Italian influence is to be discerned, coming in particular from the *Il Cortegiano* of Castiglione, of which we shall hear more later. There are certain features in the system which bear a strong personal imprint, as well as certain other forward-looking elements which go to justify the position which such writers as Guizot would accord to Rabelais the educator. There is, at the same time, a certain survival of Scholasticism to be seen in the stress laid on memory and repetition, the exclusive employment of oral instruction, etc. And these vestiges were common to most of the educational systems and methods propounded by the men of the New Learning.

A clearer conception of the educational ideas of the age as a whole is to be had from Gargantua's letter in the *Pantagruel*. The old man gives us a picture brimming with enthusiasm—no *laudator temporis acti* is he, but a member

of the old and changing order looking upon the roseate present:

Now, all the branches of science have been re-established, and languages have been restored: Greek, without which it is a crime for anyone to call himself a scholar, Hebrew, Chaldaic and Latin; while printed books in current use are very elegant and correct. . . . The world is now full of scholarly men, of very learned teachers, of most ample libraries; indeed, I do not believe that, in the time of Plato, Cicero or Papinian, there ever were so many advantages for study as one may find today. No one, longer, has any business going out in public or being seen in company, unless he has been well polished off in the workshop of Minerva. I see brigands, hangmen, freebooters and grooms nowadays who are more learned than were the doctors and preachers of my day. What's this I'm saying? Why, even the women and the girls have aspired to the credit of sharing this heavenly manna of fine learning.

Gargantua's first stress is on languages. The education of the Humanists had a decided linguistic tinge, languages being a key: Greek and Latin to the classic literatures; Hebrew and Chaldaic to the Scriptures. Greek, Latin and Hebrew were the three favoured tongues, the ones taught in the Collège Royal, or "trilingual academy," as Marot calls it; but Erasmus had recommended, in addition, the study of Chaldaic as being indispensable to Old Testament interpretation.

After speaking of his having taken up Greek late in life, the old man goes on to mention his favourite authors and their works: Plutarch's *Morals;* Plato's *Dialogues;* the

Monuments of Pausanias; the *Antiquities* of Athenaeus. In Plutarch and Plato, we may have something in the nature of a personal confession of indebtedness on Rabelais' part; but as for Pausanias and Athenaeus, they are characteristic Humanist reading, being much relished for the light they throw on the minutiae of pagan life, on geography, monuments, mythology and the like.

There are also certain details as to educational method, as well as subject matter. Greek is to be learned before Latin, as Budé, on the authority of Quintilian, had advised. A writing style is to be formed "after the Greek, in imitation of Plato, as well as on the Latin, after Cicero." History is to be mastered, and cosmography (Rabelais, unlike many writers, does not confuse this subject with geography) is not to be neglected. We find a survival of the "liberal arts" in geometry, arithmetic and music. Astronomy is to be studied, but "do not bother about divinatory astrology and the art of Lully, for they are mere abuses and vanities." Civil law and philosophy, an exhaustive knowledge of natural history, an empiric knowledge of medicine (to be gained through dissections), and finally, the Holy Scriptures: such is the scheme. What the young Pantagruel is to be, in brief, is "an abysm of science," the whole based—since "wisdom does not enter the malevolent soul"—upon the fear and the love of God.

And it was, precisely, at being an "abysm of science," or of learning, that your true Humanist aimed. And Rabelais himself won from Louis Rouzeau the verbal decoration of "*Totius encyclopaediae profundissimam abyssum.*"

That "encyclopedic," it should be scarcely necessary to state, is not to be taken in a sense altogether literal, even

so far as the Humanists' favored discipline, languages, is concerned. In the Abbey of Thélème, there were to be libraries in "Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, Tuscan and Spanish." English and German are lacking, not being literary languages. German—Rabelais' "high Dutch"—was practically unknown in western Europe; what the average Frenchman, including Rabelais, knew of this language he had imbibed through Swiss patois. A knowledge of Italian was common among the Humanists, but Spanish was not widely known. As for Rabelais' own linguistic erudition, it was, probably, far from being so extensive as he might make it appear. Italian he doubtless knew, though he makes mistakes when he writes it. Of Spanish he would seem to have had little knowledge, while his acquaintance with Hebrew and Arabic is shadier still. And yet, it is this same Rabelais who, in the famous ninth chapter of the *Pantagruel* (Book Second), where the super-linguistic Panurge makes his debut, proceeds to give us specimens of German, Italian, Scotch, Basque, Dutch, Spanish, Danish, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, as well as of three forged dialects. Did he actually know and speak all these languages—possess, at least, a literary acquaintance with them? He did not. Where, then, did he get these fragments? The answer is, probably from some student or other foreigner in cosmopolitan Paris. As for Rabelais' countless classic allusions, it may be remarked that, while his intimate knowledge of the two classic tongues is not to be questioned,—he was a man, in the phrase of the time, *utraque lingua doctus—utriusque linguae omnifariaeque doctrinae peritissimus* was Tiraqueau's tribute—he still does not always go directly back to his sources, but not in-

frequently, and not too frequently, is to be discovered making use of current translations.

In all this, Rabelais is a fairly typical representative of his age. What he may lack on any one special side, he makes up for by an extraordinary erudition in some other direction: in his own special field of medicine and the allied branches of natural science; in his first-hand knowledge of French dialects, and of all lingoes, from the lowest to the highest; in his amazing erudition in the common every-day things of life, children's games, the amusements of his time; etc. Rabelais' employment of nautical terms is illustrative of this multifarious learning of his. Assailed by the nineteenth-century naval authority, Jal, Rabelais has been found to be right, after all; the terms he makes use of are, for the most part, dialectically correct, many of them making their appearance for the first time in his pages.

For this half-century was one that hungered and thirsted after knowledge, and fervently longed to take, like Bacon, all knowledge for its province, even though the desire may never have been literally gratified. This was another and highly intoxicating Humanist vintage. Panurge, though he comes from "the garden of France, that is, Touraine," still must stave off the barkings of his stomach by giving expression to his hunger in ten languages, of which his creator, it is likely, could read three or four at the most. And to this "manna," we are told, "even the women and the girls" aspired.

IX

An understanding of the early years of the Renaissance

is not to be had without something of an insight into the new and varying attitudes toward that most perduring of all variants in the human equation: Woman. The plural has been employed deliberately; for there was not merely *a* new point of view with regard to the sex; there were a number of such points of view, each differing from an elder Chivalric ideal which had come to be summed up, along with the attributes of the perfect knight, in the goldenly orotund syllables, *Courtoisie*.

And that remark of the aged Gargantua does not give us the key. It was not that the sex had come to aspire to a masculine culture and erudition. It is not the beginnings of co-education, or anything like it, that we are witnessing here; co-education was to come from Scotland and America, some three centuries later. Educated women there were at this time, like Sir Thomas More's daughters, and Erasmus gives us a list of such outstanding figures; but they remained outstanding. The bluestocking we have had with us always.

No, the thing cut somewhat deeper than that. From about the middle of the fifteenth century, there had been a rather thorough threshing out of the whole question of woman's relation to man and her general place in the scheme of things; and by the early years of the century following, two well defined and sharply opposed camps were drawn up, the adherents of one side looking upon woman as all but divine, while the other side regarded her as too, too earthy. The spiritual, spiritualized point of view we find given expression in such a work as that by Rabelais' friend, Amaury Bouchard, the *Tes Gynaikeias Phytles, Id Est Femenei Sexus Apologia*, published in 1522 (compare the *De Praecellentia Femenei Sexus* of Cornelius Agrippa),

while the more carnal point of view is set forth in such a treatise as the jurist, Andre Tiraqueau's *De Legibus Connubialibus*, which, while nominally a technical work on the legal aspects of matrimony, contains at least six pages of what a mid-nineteenth-century French editor terms "incredible obscenity."

One of these views, the idealistic one, was, in the nineteenth century, to be given poetic expression by such British Catholic poets as Coventry Patmore and Francis Thompson. The other view has been put by Rabelais, in the mouth of one of his characters, Dr. Rondibilis—see the doctor's advice to Panurge on the subject of the latter's marriage, and especially the views he airs on the "inconstant sex," in Book Third, Chapter XXXII.—and M. Plattard would have us believe that Rondibilis is Rabelais speaking.

What was the origin of these opposing and incompatible views? It is only by examining closely the documents of an age that we are enabled to explain their origins. We then perceive that the view of woman as an angel of light is a derivative of the new Platonism, for the introduction of which into France Marguerite d'Angoulême, Queen of Navarre, was chiefly responsible. The author of the *Heptameron* (if the sole author she is) gathered about her a brilliant group, which numbered among its members Rabelais, Clément Marot and other literary lights of the time. Out of this group came such work as the *Parfaicte Amye* of Antoine Heroët, not to mention Marguerite's own feminist tracts: *La Mort et Ressurection d'Amour; Réponse a une Chanson Faicte par une Dame; La Distinction du Vrai Amour;* etc. Rabelais himself, though it was with the anti-feminists that he was to line up, would appear to have fallen

under the Queen's spell; and it is, curiously enough, "To the Spirit of the Queen of Navarre" that we find him dedicating his nothing if not anti-feminist Third Book.

This idealistic view of woman, it may be seen, derives directly from the Revival of Learning in France, and it is to Marguerite that such an authority as Prof. Lefranc would ascribe a major degree of credit for the bringing about of the French Renaissance. The doctrine, an extended application of the implicit teachings of Plato, in so far as it looks to the future, holds elements of modernity.

The earthly view, while it would seem to come out of the heart of the later Middle Ages, is a throwback to a purely pagan antiquity, an antiquity more pagan than that of Plato, inasmuch as the brand of Platonism preached by Marguerite and her followers would remain more or less of a thing in the air without the intervening touch of Christianity. The carnal attitude, if we trace it back far enough, will be found stemming from the *Carmina Burana* of the twelfth and thirteenth-century Goliards, those gay student dogs, the *Vagantes*, who had ceased to be greatly impressed by the knight's swaggering talk of his lady-love and the troubadour's sentimental strains, but who knew all about the mystic marriage of Bacchus and Venus, as consummated in the tavern and in the little room above the tavern. It has long been an open secret that Chivalry, while it contained a very real ideal, remained often—an ideal, something to be striven for rather than attained. Mr. Tennyson and his *Idyls* do not quite tell the tale. And none knew this better than the roving disciple of that jocund primate, old Bishop Golias. The Goliardic corpus of pothouse verse is

the expression of a disillusionment that had somewhile dawned.

It was this influence, no doubt, as much as any other, which, about the year 1450, brought to a head, as our friend, Bridlegoose, would say, the whole subject of woman and man's relation to woman as embodied in the Christian institution of matrimony. It was the Goliards who led up to the *Querelle des Femmes*, or Woman Question, a controversy which raged for something like a century, attaining its peak of intensity on the eve of the Wars of Religion.

"One may say," observes Prof. Lefranc, "that from 1450, or thereabouts, down to the years which witnessed the beginning of the Reformation, marriage appeared as an institution badly battered in the breach. The attacks and satires directed against it are infinitely more numerous than the panegyrics. It furnished a facile and a merry theme for a number of semi-popular laments."

Among the works which appeared on the theme was the *Quinze Joyes de Mariage*, or the *Fifteen Joys of Marriage*, questionably attributed in the past to Antoine de la Salle, but which may date as far back as the beginning of the fifteenth century. This idea was frequently played upon, and the author of a manuscript work listed in the Catalogue Chardin discovers as high as 366 pleasures; he compares the chances of matrimony to those of navigation, finding that, in the one case, a man is within two inches of cuckoldom, while in the other he is within two inches of death. (Compare Panurge and his "nine joys," at the conclusion of Chapter XXIII., Book Fourth.)

Another work which, for its influence, is not to be over-

looked is the *Arrests d'Amour*, or *Decrees of the Court of Love*, of Martial de Paris, known as Martial d'Auvergne. There was also Erasmus' *Institution of Christian Marriage*, which, dedicated to the Queen of England, appeared in 1526. Erasmus stresses the gravity of the institution, and places the married state above celibacy. He urges that the male seek a cultivated and balanced mind in his mate. But his treatise is hardly to be termed popular, and probably had little if any influence outside scholastic and literary circles.

But whatever the masculine attitude toward her, woman was playing a widening social role. She was beginning to look askance at the fireside and the family wash, and at least to gaze beyond the threshold of her home. In all of which may be seen a sixteenth-century version of Woman's Rights. It was a century of brilliant women; a mere list of their names is a bit dazzling: Marguerite d'Angoulême; Vittoria Colonna, Anne Boleyn, Catherine de' Medici, Diane de Poitiers, Sir Thomas More's daughters, Jeanne of Aragon, and, a little later, Elizabeth, Mary Stuart, and others.

All the aspects of the Querelle des Femmes cannot be gone into here, nor all the works dealing with it listed. It will be sufficient to say that it was a controversy from which no writer or thinker of the period could well have stood apart, had he desired to do so. A comprehension of Rabelais' Third Book, for example, taken up as that book is with the question of whether or not Panurge is to marry, calls for an acquaintance with the background here sketched in. The Querelle, indeed, as we shall see, altered the whole plan of composition of the *Pantagruel*. Woman, if she did

not at once come into her rights, had succeeded in upsetting masculine peace for a lively hundred years.

X

Woman's new importance in the scheme of things was in no small degree due to an influence coming out of Italy and the Italian Renaissance. This influence may best be seen embodied in that manual of Renaissance knighthood, the *Il Cortegiano* of Baldassare Castiglione. Translations from Castiglione and other Italian writers of the period were in common circulation and exerted a ponderable influence on the feminist movement in France.

But the Italian Renaissance came bringing more than one gift. In the words of a modern Frenchman and a scholar, M. Lazare Sainéan, it "transformed and renovated national (French) civilization, in the domains of military art, architecture and navigation." Private life alone—the clothes which the average citizen wore, the food he ate, the coinage with which he paid for these, the music to which he listened, (French music was under Flemish influence until the latter half of the sixteenth century)—appeared to remain without this sphere of influence.

It was the arts of architecture and warfare which were the first to encounter the new impulse. The architectural influence is to be descried in such a structure as Rabelais' Abbey of Thélème, which, technically, is not so mythical as it might seem—the descriptions given are sufficiently exact to have enabled a modern French architect to draw up the plan and elevation. Thélème is a typical Renaissance château, of the type considered most sumptuous about the

year 1533. While preserving the general character of a feudal castle, it is distinguished by its additional luxurious features.

In connection with the art of war, we find the whole military vocabulary undergoing a profound change as a result of the Italian expeditions. Those expeditions had, in general, far-reaching and historic consequences, consequences that were evident in more than one sphere of social, intellectual and artistic life; and the military terminology which we find Rabelais and other writers employing is a reflection of the revolutionary developments in the mode of warfare which were coming out of Italy. Among the provinces especially affected were fencing and horsemanship. In Rabelais, there are a number of allusions to the old or the new-fashioned method of fencing. Here, we are to remember that the "old-fashioned" method was the French, more or less free-for-all; the "new-fashioned" being the Italian. As for equitation, it is the new-fashioned mode of horseback-riding which the youthful Gargantua learns from his squire, Gymnastes. The details are given in Chapter XXIII. of the *Gargantua*, where new-fangled Italian terms such as *voltiger* (Italian: *volteggiare*), meaning "to leap a horse," are to be found beside such classic reminiscences as the *desultorii equi* (Gargantua's "desultories") of Livy. There had grown up a sort of equine snobbery, and a Neapolitan charger, for example, was considered quite the *ultra* sort of thing.

The instances cited are illustrative of the manner in which the new influence, coming from the South, had filtered through those departments of life which were susceptible to foreign contact. The same thing might be done with other fields of activity, but to do so in anything like

an exhaustive fashion would require a fair-sized volume. As has been stated, architecture and warfare were the first to be affected; but within a dozen years or so, navigation and other secondary pursuits were beginning to show the effects of the Gaul's contact with Italian culture.

More than this, life itself, the mere details of daily living and the modes of social intercourse, took on a new flexibility and a new graciousness. Even the language that men spoke did not remain the same, particularly, at court, and after the accession of Henry II. and his Italian bride, Catherine de' Medici. With Henry's courtiers, "Italianizing" the language, as the phrase went, became not merely a fashion but a mania. It was against this linguistic abuse that Henri Estienne was to protest, a little later (in 1578), in his *Deux Dialogues du Nouveau Langage François Italianizé:* "I desire to warn my readers that I have no intention of speaking that motley French tongue, which changes its livery every day as fancy may happen to strike Monsieur the Courtier or the Gentleman of the Palace." An allusion to the "Italianizers" has been seen in the "Lanternese" language which Panurge promises to teach Pantagruel, as they set out in quest of the Holy Bottle, the dictionary of which, however, Panurge assures his lord, will not last "any longer than daybreak the next morning." Like the Limousin Student with his "Latinizings," those who spoke "the courtly Lanternese" (the jibe is rather obvious) came in, sometimes for serious attack as with Geoffroy Tory and Henri Estienne, and sometimes for a deal of fun-poking as with Rabelais.

But the linguistic nationalists, like most purists, frequently wasted their scruples. Estienne objects to the in-

vasion of nautical terms, but the terms, for the greater part, remain. It was a case of one of those vast historic influences which are not to be withstood. And this contact of France and Italy was not, precisely, a novel thing; it had begun in the fourteenth century, though it had weakened somewhat the century following. But it was not until the first half of the sixteenth century, Rabelais' own age, that it began to bear a nourishing fruit. It was then that the "wine" commenced to run heady in the cup—as the army of Charles VIII. wheeled into march and started pouring over the Alps.

The French Renaissance was on!

FRANÇOIS RABELAIS: MAN OF THE RENAISSANCE

CHAPTER ONE

WINDMILLS IN MIREBALAIS

And that he might be able to amuse himself like the other little children of the country, they made for him a lovely whirligig from the wings of the Windmill of Mirebalais.

Book First, Chapter XI.

I

As Charles' army filed through the Alpine gorges, led on by a vision of conquest and the righting of royal wrongs, not a man among them, it goes without saying, dreamed of the fruitful and far-reaching consequences of that pomp-laden expedition. Charles himself, though he was to show himself something other than a coward at Fornovo, was more concerned with the ritualistic trappings of war than with the minutiae of battle, and possibly was already envisaging himself entering Naples in the imperial insignia, as he was to do in May of the following year. In any event, the feeble, tottering-minded young monarch of the grandiose imagination could not have known that the prideful claims of the House of Anjou—claims to which, as Louis XI.'s only son he had fallen a none too capable heir—were des-

tined to occasion what future historians would look upon as a mental and spiritual Rebirth on the part of his people, the French. Much less could he have foreseen that one of the results of his southern ambitions was to be the introduction into France of a malady which all the newly resuscitated art of Galen could not cure, but a malady which one who was then, in all probability, an infant in arms in the old fief of the Counts of Anjou was, a few decades later, to treat—and treat very agreeably, if report be true—with certain Chronicles, "sinapized with a little *pouldre d'oribus*," a recipe more efficacious than the reading of the life of Margaret or any other Saint.

For it was on August 29, 1494, that Charles, flinging a gay farewell to his queen and humming, it may be, a ballad of André de la Vigne's, set his army in motion. And at that time, if we accept the date—February 3–4, 1494—which so eminent an authority as Prof. Lefranc would fix as that of Rabelais' birth, the subject of this biography must have been about six months old.

The fact that we do not even know, for a documented certainty, where or when it was that François Rabelais, the "creator of French literature," as Chateaubriand was to term him, first saw the light is but illustrative of the shadows which in the past have lain over his life as a whole, a darkness which, in the nineteenth century, led to Michelet's despairing cry: "Would to heaven that it were possible to do a life of Rabelais!" Much has been done, since Michelet uttered that exclamation, in the way of clearing up the dark spots, and a mature portion of Rabelais' physical existence is now covered by documents of one sort or an-

other, even though those documents may not always be highly important or revealing ones.

Chroniclers of an older school were not so fastidious. In a work of 1624, entitled the *Defense d'Estienne Pasquier*, we read:

"In the first place, then, Rabelais was born at Chinon, where, as he boasts, he consumed many tumblers of wine. And to this very day, he has his nephews lineal who have done their best to perpetuate that manner of jesting which rendered their kinsman the matchless one of his age.

"As for any desire to leaf through the documents *(chroniques)* in order to discover Rabelais' personal circumstances *(tenants et aboutissants)*, all that is *nil ad nos*."

And "*nil ad nos*" it has been, with a vengeance. In one of his lectures at the Collège de France, Professor Lefranc, after quoting the foregoing passage, added:

"The point of view today is directly opposed to that which prevailed along about 1624. We are possessed of a desire to know all about Rabelais' 'personal circumstances'."

Let us begin, then, with family, since nothing can well be more personal or more circumstantial than that.

The name, Rabelais, in French is not an uncommon one, occurring as it does in various parts of the country and under something like a dozen different forms, while in its Latinized form it exhibits at least half as many variations. Among the French spellings, we may note: Rabellais; Rabelays; Rabellays; Rabaillais; Rablais; Rabellet; Rabelès; Rabellese; Rabellaise; Rabeloys. And among the Latin: Rabeleius; Rabelaesus; Rabelesus; Rablaesus; Rabelesius; Rabelezus; etc. The meaning of the name, M. Henri Clouzot,

the Gallic archivist, has suggested, is: a maple-tree plantation; *rabelais* being a derivative of the French *érable*. Fantastic etymologists of an allegorizing bent had once attempted to explain the name as being composed of *rab*, master (cf. the Hebrew *rabbi*), and *lez*, a jester.

Whatever the Rabelais family may have been in its linguistic origins, whether maple-groves or master jesters, the earliest trace we find of them is in the person of one Guillaume Rabelais, whom, in the year 1457, we know to have been a tenant of the Abbey of Seuilly, a good three miles to the south of Chinon—the place where Friar John Hackem, with lusty stick of the cross, defended the abbey close against a Picrocholine enemy. François' grandmother was one Andrée, née Pavin. Married at first to N—— Rabelais, who appears to have died young, she later married again, her name becoming Frapin; and by this second husband, she had six children, one of whom became Canon of Angers, "Seigneur de Saint-Georges," the "*vieux oncle*" alluded to in the Old Prologue to Rabelais' Fourth Book, "the same one who made up and composed the charming little Christmas carols in the language of Poitou."

As for François' father, the latter's name was Antoine, not Thomas, Rabelais; and he was neither a tavern-keeper nor an apothecary, but a well-to-do barrister, one with a respected place in the community and who was later to be intrusted with an important government post. This, of course, takes some of the colour out of the thing, but a few of the chromatics are retrieved when we see the use which Rabelais later makes of his domestic background, in connection with the Cake-Baker's War in the *Gargantua*. The apothecary legend possibly arose through a confusion with

one Antoine Rabelais who lived at the close of the century (dying about 1616), whose father's name was Thomas, and who followed the pharmaceutical profession. The tavern-keeper's son, on the other hand, probably reflects a confusion of addresses in Chinon, where François' father owned a house. That house stood in the rue La Lamproie, at what is at present No. 15 of that street. About the year 1590, a hostelry "de la Lamproie" was installed in the old Rabelais dwelling. This hostelry, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, was removed to another house in the same street, the present No. 2. In the Chinon of today, affixed to what is known as the maison Rabelais, will be found a signboard bearing the esoteric legend: "From this window, Dr. François Rabelais once fished for a lamprey." One looks in vain among those mediæval cobbles for signs of a vanished piscine race and its fluvial habitat. But the townspeople and the tourist are not a whit more gullible than, up to a very few years ago, Rabelais' assuming biographers have been.

The family, as a matter of fact, may even be said to have been a wealthy one, in view of its considerable property holdings. In addition to the farm at La Devinière, in the parish of Seuilly, there was the estate of Chavigny-en-Vallée, commune of Varennes-sur-Loire (Maine-et-Loire), which Antoine came by through his wife; there was the estate of Gravot in the commune of Bourgueil, not far from Bénais, where a number of Rabelais' relatives resided in the sixteenth century; there was La Pomardière, in the commune of Seuilly; there was Quinquenais (cf. "Quinquenais Johnny"—Jenin de Quinquenays—in Book Fourth, Chapter XLIV.), in the commune of Chinon, where the family

had a country house; there was the clos Rabelais in the Seuilly neighbourhood and the grand clos Rabelais; there was the pré Rabelais, in the commune of Cinais near Pontille, whence came the milk for the infant Gargantua, from the 17,913 cows; there were, finally, the two arpents of ground situated near the Miller's Bridge (the Moulin du Pont). These places will be found referred to frequently in the *Gargantua*, which is the most realistic portion of Rabelais' work; see, in particular, the passage describing the mobilization of Grandgousier's legions, Book First, Chapter XLVII.

A family owning so much property as this could hardly be said to be in straitened circumstances. The Rabelais' were related to a number of families, including the Dusouls, the Frapins (among whom we find an apothecary at the end of the century), to the Gallets (cf. Ulrich Gallet, Grandgousier's master-of-requests; we shall hear more of him later, in connection with the real-life background of the Cake-Bakers' War), to the Aquins, the Delopiteaux, etc. Among their neighbours was the pompous, choleric and overbearing Gaucher de Sainte-Marthe, who has been satisfactorily identified as Picrochole's prototype. Sainte-Marthe, who was the father of the very fine court poet, Charles de Sainte-Marthe, and who held the seigniories of Lerné, Chappeau and Thorète, was, in addition to being the village "squire," a member of the same profession which the young François' was destined to follow, that of medicine, being physician-in-ordinary to His Majesty, the King, and to the noble Abbess of Fontevrault. We have, then, François' father, Antoine Rabelais, and Gaucher de Sainte-Marthe as the two big men of a small town; and when two big men

meet in a small town, there is, quite often, trouble. There was in this case, in due time, as we shall see.

Antoine Rabelais, Sieur de la Devinière and licencié ès lois, married into the Dusoul family. After an honourable if provincial career, he died in 1534 (certainly before January 26, 1535), leaving four children: Jamet, Antoine (whose will we have, dated January 22, 1559), Françoise, (who married a Pallu), and François. In his will, he named as his heirs Jamet, Antoine, René Pallu and his wife, Françoise, Jean Gallet and Michel Endre (Eudde). François, for reasons which will appear, did not share in this division of the family property.

Where François Rabelais was born, on which of the family holdings, whether in the house in the rue La Lamproie at Chinon or on the farm at La Devinière, for these are the only two plausible conjectures, we cannot state with the sort of certainty that would be admitted in a court of probate. We know that Rabelais looked upon himself as a man "from Chinon," for when he matriculates as a medical student at Montpellier, we shall find him inscribing himself as "*Chinonensis.*" This however, may mean merely a native of the Chinon region. The older view was that he was born in the town itself, that "first city of the world"; and this view was held by such comparatively modern Rabelaisian scholars as Rathery, Fleury, Moland, Gebhart and Stapfer. But as far back as the last century, critical biographic opinion had begun to veer, and we find such writers as Dumoustier, Bellanger, Chevalier and Charles de Grandmaison, along with Bosseboeuf and Grimaud, supporting the thesis that Rabelais' birth occurred at La Devinière.

This latter view, it may be observed, is in accord with

local tradition. In 1699, a certain traveller, one Roger de Gaignières, visited both Chinon and La Devinière. De Gaignières carried with him his own draftsman, by the name of Boudan; and he had sketches made of the so called "Rabelais House" at Chinon and of the La Devinière farm-house. Beside the sketch of the latter he wrote:

La Devinière, a good league from Chinon, within two gunshot-ranges of the Abbey of Seuilly, and almost directly opposite La Roche-Clermault, is the place where Rabelais was born, in the parish of St. Peter of Seuilly in Touraine.

In the *Histoire de La Rochelle* of the Benedictine annalist, P. Arcère, published in 1756, we find the statement that Rabelais was born at La Devinière near Chinon. And finally, the *Annuaire d'Indre-et-Loire pour l'An X.* speaks of the clos de la Devinière as being the birthplace of "the incomparable Rabelais" (this in 1802).

This evidence, if evidence it may be termed, is no more than a ranging of fairly early traditions; but building upon such data, Prof. Lefranc has found in Rabelais' romance what he believes to be conclusive internal evidence to indicate that La Devinière was the author's natal site. The French scholar points out the preponderantly important rôle of La Devinière in the *Gargantua* and elsewhere; whereas the town of Chinon itself, except in the posthumous Fifth Book, is not made at all important. In the *Gargantua*, what we know as Book First, it is La Devinière that is Grandgousier's family home and military headquarters, the seat of operations in the war against Picrochole. And what better place to be born than one where the wine tastes like that Lachryma Christi which caused a German master-of-arts en route to Rome to exclaim:

Utinam Christus vellet etiam flere in patria nostra—Oh, if Christ would only weep a little in our country!

II

While the Friar was skirmishing in the manner we have described against those who had entered the close, Picrochole in great haste was crossing the Gué de Vede with his followers and was assailing La Roche-Clermault, at which place he met with no resistance whatsoever. Since it was already dark, he decided to put himself and his men up in that town for the night, and to seek there a little relief from the bad humour that was eating him.

To come to La Devinière from Chinon, unless one elects a more affluent motor or a more poetic pair of feet, one takes a little sleepy-eyed train which has started, presumably, at Tours, and which is headed in the direction of l'Ile-Bouchard, and one leaves the train at La Roche-Clermault.

La Devinière, l'Ile-Bouchard, La Roche-Clermault! The names on the railroad timetable in this country have stepped out of the pages of *Gargantua.* L'Ile Bouchard, whither the defeated and despairing Picrochole fled, to be beaten by the millers whose ass he had attempted to steal, stripped of his clothes, and clad in a gunny-sack. And here we are, climbing out at La Roche-Clermault, where Picrochole previously had had a little better luck.

The *vin pineau* at Chinon has been unusually tasty this afternoon, and has proved more than a little heady when taken in repeated quantities. We have had to linger, too, to hear the *cabaretier* set forth the merits of his own vintage

as contrasted with those of the neighbouring *clos*. It has all been very technical and very thrilling, and we have added to our knowledge of wines, if not of Rabelais—the two being the same, if an elder, vinous school of biography is right. The result is, we have selected a later train than the one we should have taken, and the shadows are falling as we step out on the station platform at La Roche-Clermault. Our minds, none the less, are firm: we will have a glimpse of La Devinière—at least, of the outside of the house—before we go to bed. We look about for a town, and once more fail to find one. In this case, the town is not to materialize later, as at Chinon; there simply is none. What there is is a *gare*, with the *chef de gare* and his family housed above it, with a tavern opposite and, up the road, a few straggling farmhouses; facing the *gare* are fields and, a little to one side in the distance, shrouded by trees and the twilight, a church-spire.

We make inquiries as to La Devinière. Surely, every peasant must take a pride in the spot. But all we get from the *chef de gare* is a Gallic shrug and a "*sais pas*." Tourists, it seems, of the non-native brand, with the possible exception of an archæologizing Britisher with an interest in Gothic cornices, seldom get so far out of the path. Having viewed the château at Chinon and listened to the concierge's lecture on how Jeanne met the Dauphin and there conversed with him, they commonly call it a day and go back to Tours, with a glance in passing at the Rabelais statue in the public square. For ourselves, we decide that discretion is an archæologue's first virtue, and that the thing to do is to find and bespeak a lodging for the night—we may be able

"Lachryma Christi! It's from La Devinière"

(The House, Probably, in Which Rabelais Was Born. The Dwelling Dates from the Fifteenth Century)

to see La Devinière by moonlight, if there happens to be a moon!

We start out in full faith up the road, feeling certain that one of these hospitable farmhouses will take us in. They will not. One after another, the master or the mistress, calling from the garden or leaning from a window to rebuff us, sends us to the one just beyond, until our feet are weary and our tempers sore. We then come back to the tavern and inquire concerning the prospects of a meal. They serve, it appears, no food. We broach the question of a lodging, and with a "*Ne couche personne*"—"We never sleep anybody" —the door is banged on our backs. By this time, it has begun to drizzle, and there is nothing to do but return to the station. Yes, luckily, there is one train back to Chinon, and only one; it will be along in a couple of hours. It is now pouring. May we sit inside the *gare?* We may not. The *gare* is being locked, and the *chef de gare* is slipping the key into his pocket. He goes off somewhere, leaving his wife, from an upper window, to keep a wary eye upon us. Inhospitality? No. Merely French red tape, the suspicion being doubtless a part of the railway's book of rules.

Outside, in the rain, we remember Picrochole. A mighty and a puissant man was he, to be able to take La Roche-Clermault "with no resistance whatsoever" (*auquel lieu ne luy feut faicte resistance quelconques*); and if he succeeded in putting "himself and his men up in that town for the night," he was a better forager than we.

Eventually, as train-time draws near, the *gare* is charily opened once more, and a gentleman in a beard and erudite pince-nez comes in. The beard and eyeglasses prove

friendly, and as we shake out our dripping garments, we do our best to be intelligent on the subject of pre-Renaissance —architecture, of course. But first, we have told our new acquaintance of our mission—

"La Devinière? Ah, yes. It is right over there. You can see it from here."

We gaze, desperately hard, but are able to make out nothing, except, possibly, by the lightening sky—for the moon *is* coming up after all!—what looks as though it might be a house, a mile or so away. And then, our friend puts a question:

"Are you interested in old buildings?"

We admit that we are not wholly disinterested.

"Then, I shall be able to show you some much more interesting ones than La Devinière."

"Yes, but Rabelais—Rabelais was born there, wasn't he?"

"I believe he was. But if you wish to see some old, old, old, old buildings, come and see me some time." And he presents us with his card.

I, for one, shall not forget that "*vieux, vieux, vieux, vieux batiments.*" There is in those words something that says Touraine, just as, at Chinon, after the château, the thing they show you and the thing they put on the picture post-cards is the old fifteenth- and sixteenth-century dwellings. It was on this soil, and out of this soil, that François Rabelais was born, a terrain suffused, architecturally and otherwise, with the very spirit of the Middle Ages, super-imposed upon other far more ancient and even pre-historic strata.

Our acquaintance, meanwhile, would seem to have conferred upon us a novel respectability. He is, we learn, a

small-landholder; and the country people who have come in appear to think we must be all right, in view of the fact that we are honored with his conversation. For the Chinonais still has its Antoine Rabelais' and its Gaucher de Sainte-Marthes; times have not greatly changed.

As, for better luck, we motor down to La Devinière the next day, we are afforded another glimpse of this enchanting Garden of France. The Touraine landscape is enchanting for the reason that, like our own midwestern prairies, it is not damned with picturesqueness. It is a land of sun and wine and vine-clad wall; the white stones that immure the vineyards may be seen grown with moss. It is a land of the walnut and chestnut, the pine, the willow and the oak. (Was it not the farmers who had been knocking nuts from the trees who came running up with their long poles to the aid of Grandgousier's shepherds, after the latter had been assaulted by the Cake-Bakers of Lerné? It is at the party in the Willow Grove, an actual site near La Devinière, that Gargamelle consumes sixteen kegs, two half-casks and six jugs full of tripes, just before giving miraculous birth. And Rabelais even anticipates Mr. Longfellow's "spreading chestnut tree" with his "*grand et ample chastaignier*" which shelters the Sibyl of Panzoult's hovel. Trees, indeed, will be found to constitute an integral part of the Rabelaisian opus, as they do of the Touraine paysage; Rabelais, here as elsewhere, is an accurate transcriber.) Back of and through the trees and upon the uplands, villages and steeples may be sighted, and, everywhere over the countryside, a shimmer of red-tiled roofs. It is, in short, a mellow and a charming but not a sentimental landscape—a good one for François Rabelais to have been born in.

The *metairie* of La Devinière may best be located, possibly, with reference to La Roche-Clermault. The directions then become simple. Take the road from La Roche-Clermault to Lerné to a point about a kilometre this side of Seuilly; then turn to the right, and from there it is but a few minutes' walk to the hamlet which bears the name of Rabelais' ancestral homestead. Ask any of the peasants; they all know the house, the last to the right "*au fond.*"

The house itself is a stone structure which appears to date from the fifteenth century. The most striking external feature is a flight of stone steps, under a sort of penthouse extension of the roof, which gives the general effect of a loggia and commands a fine view of the surrounding country. On the ground floor, past which the stair runs, is a large room with a fine old chimney-piece. On the second floor, as we would call it, what the French call the *premier étage*, are two rooms, one of which, led up to directly by the stair, is known as "*la chambre de Rabelais.*" This room has an ample fireplace, but the distinctive feature is, perhaps, a stone window seat. Here, the sentimentalizer likes to think, the Maître himself may have sat, looking out over his "Touraine garden," as he mused of Uranopet Decretals and Christian Pears and the Dreadful Deeds that were Pantagruel's—or, more likely, of the Lord of Lerné, and how the latter had just been making an ass of himself over that river-dam of his, and how the whole might be worked up into a perfectly ripping takeoff on that best-seller which, of late, had been outselling the Bible itself by a ratio of more than fifty-four to one.

In any event, the faithful have not failed to pay their homage at the shrine, as is witnessed by the Greek and other

inscriptions which they have left behind them, tribute of the visiting Humanist. The other room also has a stone seat. Above is the corn-loft; and here, likewise, will be found inscriptions, though not in any learned tongue; for it was here that the landlord and his tenants did their figuring at harvest-time, when the intake of grain was divided up. On the outside, about the house, are the usual farm-adjuncts: a well, a trough, a storeroom, a pigeon-coop, an oven, various shanties, caves or cellars hollowed out of the rock, and an obstructed subterranean passageway. The last is of interest for the tradition attaching to it, to the effect that Rabelais, once upon a time, when especially hard pressed, made use of it to stage what we would describe as a getaway.

This, then, is Rabelais' house, and this his country: a habitation almost barrenly plain, and a countryside which, while it smells of wine, is yet somewhat restrained in its ardours. That very "*ne couche personne*" of the *cabaretier* at La Roche-Clermault is not without its significance. The men of Touraine, while lacking in that churlishness which your Breton or your Norman is capable of exhibiting to strangers upon occasion, is not possessed of the emotional warmth of the man of the *midi*, even the southern mountaineer. It is not until they discover that the stranger is interested in "*vieux, vieux, vieux, vieux batiments*," or something that interests them,—that he has, in other words, an excuse for being there,—it is not until then that they really take him in.

But they are most estimable lads, on the whole; and nothing that is said here is to be held, either against them or against me. They drink, like Gymnastes, without putting

their noses into their cups. But they do have a habit, sometimes, of smiling over the brim of their beakers,—as though they saw a very good and rather distant joke.

III

It was, we will say, on his father's farm at La Devinière that François Rabelais was born. But when? That is the next question. The dates which have been assigned for his birth range over a period of seventeen years, from 1483 to 1500.

The earliest date is based upon the burial-record (*épitaphier*) of St. Paul's Church in Paris. This record, which is now preserved in the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, is of a date later than 1739. In it, alongside three epitaphs adressed to Rabelais, there is the entry:

François Rabelais, deceased, aged 70, rue des Jardins (Saint-Paul), the 9th. of April, 1553, was interred in St. Paul's cemetery.

If Rabelais was seventy at the time of his death, in 1553, he must have been born in 1483.

Against this, several arguments have been advanced. One is based upon an autograph letter from Rabelais to Budé (on of the Fillon autographs, now in the Morrison Collection at London), a letter which so late an editor as Marty-Laveaux looked upon as dubious, as had Rathery before him, but which the Lefranc group of scholars accept as genuine. In this letter, the date of which is March 4, (1521), Rabelais, addressing the highly respected French Humanist leader, refers to himself as *adulescens*. Now, as M. Plattard points out, the word *adulescens* with the Ro-

mans had a very exact use, implying (according to Isidorus Hispalensis) a male between the ages of fourteen and twenty-eight; and Rabelais, the same authority believes, was too good a classicist not to have been familiar with the shadings involved; for if he had been born in 1483, he would have been thirty-eight at the time his letter to Budé was written.

A little later, in the year 1534, at which time he would have been, according to the 1483 reckoning, all of forty-one years of age, Rabelais is praised by his jurist friend, André Tiraqueau, for possessing more than his share of learning in view of his age. This compliment, addressed to a man of forty-one, would have been something of an impertinence. The 1483 date would have him beginning his medical studies at the age of forty-seven and his literary career at forty-nine. It is, briefly, out of keeping with what is now known of Rabelaisian chronology.

But in bringing the date up, the authorities have by no means been able to agree as to just how far up it should be brought. While Fleury adhered to 1483, Gebhart believed the true date was somewhere "between 1483 and 1495." Moland, following Gui Patin, put it at 1490, while Stapfer was more general: "the last decade of the fifteenth century." Professor Tilley thinks Rabelais was born "about 1495," which was the date adopted by Rathery. It was left for Professor Lefranc to drop it down a year and fix it with some exactitude. And how this was done? Through the slaying of 367,014 fat oxen!

The statement which has just been made is not intended as a jest; and the fashion in which Professor Lefranc sets about nailing down the year of Rabelais' birth will serve to

illustrate the manner in which contemporary scholarship sometimes functions. Open your *Gargantua* to Chapter IV., where the beginning of Gargamelle's travail is described. There, we read that a certain pre-obstetric event occurred "one after-dinner, the third day of February," from the lady's having eaten too many *gaudebillaux*, or the tripes of fat oxen. The oxen in the case, we learn, had been killed in order that they might be "salted down Shrove Tuesday, so that, in the Spring, they might have a plenty of beef in season, as a spicy and commemorative offering to their palates at the beginning of their meals, to enable them to enter into their wine in better fashion." And the information contained in this first paragraph alone is sufficient to enable Professor Lefranc to reconstruct the date of birth as February 3-4, 1494.

In the first place, observing the use which Rabelais makes of other local, domestic and autobiographic material in this book, which was written immediately after he had gone back to pay a visit to his native province, Professor Lefranc feels sure that the author, in giving the date of February 3, is thinking of his own birthday, since there is apt to be a certain method even in Maître François' tomfooleries, and even in his wildest imaginings. Granted this, where does the year come in? Something like ten days or a fortnight, it is pointed out, commonly elapse between the killing and the salting away of beef. Follows, then, business of consulting old almanacs. In all the other years, it is found, from 1488 to 1496, Easter falls in April; in the year 1494 alone, it falls on the 30th of March, which causes Shrove Tuesday of that year to fall upon February 12, or some nine days after Gargamelle's tripe-orgy and subsequent astonishing delivery.

Gargantua—and Rabelais—therefore, saw the light on the evening of February 3 or the morning of February 4, 1494.

Whether or not Professor Lefranc's deductions and their necessary hypotheses be accepted, the evidence is that Rabelais' birth must be fixed as having taken place somewhere in the neighbourhood of the year 1495. It occurred, then, some two or three years after the discovery of the New World, and practically coincided with the first Italian expedition, antedating Vasco da Gama's exploit by from three to four years.

It is interesting, if not especially important, to compare Rabelais' life-dates with those of Pietro Aretino, who was born in 1492 and who died in 1556, and who, whatever may be said of him, was a figure in the Italian Renaissance, as well as being the founder of modern journalism.

IV

The infant François was doubtless baptized in the Benedictine abbey-church of Saint-Pierre de Seuilly, "two gunshot-ranges distant," as De Gaignières puts it. The abbey, which was an ecclesiastic dependency of the religious of Maillezais in Bas-Poitou, was a foundation dating from the end of the eleventh century. The abbey buildings, including the cloisters, a church and a hôtel-Dieu, stood surrounded by low stone walls. It was in the close of this abbey, it will be recalled, that Friar John and his crozier created such carnage among the despoilers of the vineyard, and did such deeds as Maugis the Hermit, whose exploits are related along with those of the Four Sons of Aymon, never could have equalled.

What picture are we to draw for ourselves of the infancy

of this child—we who do not even know the man? What better picture could be drawn than that which Rabelais himself has given us of Everychild, as, in the manner of the old morality plays, the infant Gargantua might be dubbed?

Gargantua, from the age of three to five years, was nourished and brought up in all proper discipline, by order of his father; and this period he spent like other small children of the country, namely: in drinking, eating and sleeping; in eating, sleeping, and drinking; in sleeping, drinking and eating.

He wallowed in the mud, smudged his nose, dirtied his face, ran his shoes over at the heels, frequently caught flies with his mouth, and liked to chase the butterflies of his father's realm.

Read the rest of the chapter. In an edition not limited, it is scarcely to be transcribed verbatim.

It would be easy, in the favoured manner of the fictionizing biographers, to imagine what young François *might* have seen or done. For example, it was on December 18, 1498, in the château of Chinon, that Louis XII. received Pope Alexander VI.'s ambassador, Cæsar Borgia, who came bringing an annulment of His Majesty's marriage with Jeanne de Valois, leaving the king free to wed Anne of Brittany. The accompanying spectacle must have been a brilliant one, and Brantôme, in his life of Borgia, lets us see that it was. Ambassadors travelled sumptuously in those days, not to speak of the state that was kept by a king of the Renaissance. Did François' four-year-old eyes look upon all that panoply of silver and satin and cloth of gold? Frankly, we do not know.

One thing we may feel sure of is that he must frequently have romped through those sinuous, sun-filled, sometimes silent streets of old Chinon, bordered by houses that were the very essence of the later Middle Ages and the earlier Renaissance, with their octagonal turrets and corkscrew staircases, their gables and their crockets and their dormer-windowed grain-lofts, their mullioned panes and their jutting upper-stories. The town as a whole is best described in the old legend: "Chinon, a little city of great renown, situated upon an ancient rock, a wood above it and at its feet the Vienne." Brantôme would have us believe that the "renown" applied to the château rather than to the town, and that is true today. The two narrow streets of the village are compressed between the river at the bottom and the elevation on which the famous château stands; and some of the dwellings, which appear to be clinging to the side of the hill, have their stables and cellars hollowed out of the tuff. It is to this circumstance, no doubt, that Lord Breadinbag (Painensac) is alluding, in Chapter XII. of the *Gargantua*, when he says: "I know plenty of places . . . at Chinon and elsewhere, where the stables are at the very top of the house."

There was a hoary witticism in circulation in Rabelais' time which ascribed the founding of Chinon to Cain, the first murderer. This merry legend, which is related in Chapter XXXIV. of the Fifth Book, is said to have been due to the fact that St. Gregory of Tours, in his *Historia Francorum*, spells the name *Cainon*. Speaking of this burlesque etymology, André Duchesne, in his *Antiquitéz et Recherches de Villes . . . Plus Remarquables de Toute la France*, published in 1629, thinks it necessary to explain:

"It may be that the City of Chinon first achieved renown under the name of Cainon, but not on account of Cain." However, this must have been one of the countryside tales which went into the young François' ears.

One of the spots in the town which must have lured the latter's steps was the shop of Innocent the Pastry-Maker—"in front of the Painted Cellar at Chinon," as we read in Book Fourth, Chapter XX.—which once stood at the north-east corner of the rue du Grenier-à-sel. Both Innocent and the Painted Cellar are things of the past, but they appear to have left a vivid and refreshing memory with the Rabelais of after years, a memory so alluring that the storm-tossed Panurge recalls it in the midst of his miseries, and vows that he would be willing to strip to his doublet and go to work baking pastries in Innocent's shop, if only he might be set down upon dry land once more.

Another feature of the Chinon landscape with which Rabelais was familiar, but of which only vestiges longer remain, was the Nun's Bridge (Pont de la Nonnain) to the south of the city, on the road to La Roche-Clermault. This bridge was an historic one, having been built by Henry II. of England, in 1159. What is left of its piers may be seen standing to the east of the state road; and we are in possession of its original measurements: it was 1,650 metres in length and had 55 arches. The bridge-tolls belonged to the nuns of the Abbey of Fontevrault, whence the name. An allusion to this bridge occurs in Chapter XXXIV. of the *Gargantua.*

Did François, like the baby giant whom, out of his imagination, he was to create in later years, consume the milk from the cows that grazed his father's meadow in the

Cinais neighbourhood, near Pontille? Did he sometimes spend a vacation in the country house at Quinquenais, which was not far from Chinon; and was it there that he heard such tales as that of Jenin and his wife, Quelot?

One thing is certain, he must have been familiar, from an early age, with the inside of his father's country law office; and it was, without a doubt, there that he became acquainted with the Shysteroos *(Chiquanous)* and their "bags," and all the long-drawn-out and frequently heart-breaking technicalities of judicial procedure.

But these windjammers (avalleurs de frimars) *surely make the cases pending before them both infinite and immortal; and by so doing, they have occasioned and verified the saying of Chilon, the Lacedaemonian, carved up at Delphi, to the effect that misery is the companion of lawsuits and that folks who go to law are wretched, for the reason that they will die before they ever get the rights for which they are suing.*

And Pantagruel, when the little less than seismic case between the Lords of Baysecul and Humevesne comes up before him, displays small respect for the customary formalities:

Pantagruel thereupon said to them:

"Gentlemen, are the two lords who are parties to this case still alive?"

The answer was in the affirmative.

"Then what the devil," said he, "is the use of all this mess of papers and briefs which you are handing me? Isn't it better to hear what they have to say from their own mouths

than to read through all this monkey-business, which is nothing but a pack of lies, made up of . . . subversions of the law? For I am sure that you, and all those through whose hands this case has passed, have so bungled it with your pros and cons that, even though the dispute was a plain and easy one to judge in the first place, you have by this time rendered it thoroughly obscure, with your stupid and unreasonable reasons.

It may have been at this time that Rabelais encountered the prototype, or one of the prototypes, of his delicious Judge Bridlegoose, who decided cases by the fall of dice, and who had not met with a reversal in forty years.

The young son of a sixteenth-century *avocat* must have seen the fees which his father's clients brought in: butter, eggs, poultry, wild game, etc. In that hilarious institution, St. Victor's Library, one of the titles we come upon is "The Complaint of the Lawyers over the Reformation of Sugarplums." This refers to the fact that these voluntary contributions were later changed to money payments, and the advocates do not seem to have liked the change any too well: they lost money by it.

M. Plattard believes it may have been from his legist father that Rabelais derived that complicated orthography of his, full of unnecessary letters, which has been the despair of his editors. For the lawyers liked to put in as many letters as possible in order to stretch out their scrolls. "My cashier," declares the Lord of Salmagundi, "is not going to play any tricks on me by putting tails on his ss."

But by this time, François must have been already deep in his Donatus and the inevitable *Eight Parts of Speech.*

CHAPTER TWO

CORRUPTING THE FLOWER

He was told that it would be better for his son to learn nothing than to spend his time studying such books under such teachers; for the learning of the latter was but stupidity and their wisdom but puffery, and such pedagogues merely bastardized good and noble minds and utterly corrupted the flower of youth.

Book First, Chapter XV.

I

RABELAIS' father was in a position to give his son a very good education; and it is altogether likely that François did receive what was looked upon as a good schooling in those days; he had "advantages." In later life, like the other Humanists, he was to sneer at and ridicule the training of his youth; but this is not an unheard of thing today, as witness the incessant flood of periodical literature with the general burden: "What's Wrong with College?"

There is a local tradition to the effect that François was sent to school to the Benedictines of Seuilly, but it is not improbable that his father kept him at Chinon for a good part of his early years. Another tradition is that he became

a novice in the Franciscan monastery of La Baumette, which stood at the gates of the university town of Angers. This report comes from one Bruneau de Tartifume, an advocate of Angers, who died in 1626 at a very advanced age, and whose lifetime must, therefore, have overlapped Rabelais' own. In his *Philandinopolis*, a work preserved in the library of Angers, speaking of La Baumette, De Tartifume remarks: "François Rabelais had been a novice in this convent, a mention of which occurs in the first book of his *Gargantua*"; and the statement is repeated a little later on in the work quoted.

The mention referred to in the *Gargantua* is that in Chapter XII., where La Baumette is cited, along with Lyons and Chinon, as one of the places "where the stables are at the very top of the house"; other allusions to the Angers region will be found in Chapters IV. and V. of the *Pantagruel*. There can be no doubt, in any case, that Rabelais' youthful memories were in part associated with the city, where his mother's people, the Frapins, lived. (For Angers and the Frapins, see the description of the gory magpie battle in the Old Prologue to the Fourth Book.) While there is no record of his having attended the university there, it would seem that François must frequently have been at Angers during his twenty-first to twenty-fourth years (1515–18). It has been thought that he may have met there the Du Bellay brothers, Jean and Guillaume, who were destined to rise to high positions in the church and to become Maître François' powerful protectors. The Du Bellay arms may still be seen on the windows of the monastery chapel; but we now know that, from 1506 on, Guillaume du Bellay, at least, was a student at Paris.

The Couvent de l'Observance de la Baumette was a picturesque spot, having been founded by King René about the middle of the fifteenth century. It contained a grotto to recall to the Queen the Sainte-Baume near Marseilles—hence, the diminutive: La Baumette. It was famous for its gardens, a description of which will be found in André Lefèvre's *Parcs et Jardins.*

How did Rabelais come to enter the monastic life? For we know that, whether he passed his novitiate at La Baumette or in some other monastery, he eventually became an ordained priest. Was it a matter of lopping off a younger and potentially cumbersome member of the family? Such practice was not infrequent at the time. Turn to Chapter IV. of the always dubious Fifth Book, describing the manner in which the Parsonjays *(Clergaux)* are born. Whether or not the paragraphs are from Rabelais' hand, they are contemporary:

"'*They,*' *said Sacristan* (*Aeditue*), '*are all birds of passage. They come to us from the other world,—part of them from a marvelously large country that is called Breadlessday* (Joursanspain), *and part from another over to the West, which is known as Toomanyofem* (Tropditieux). *From these two countries, every year, these Parsonjays come to us here in troops, leaving behind them their fathers, mothers and all their friends and relatives.*

"'*The way it come about is this. Whenever, in some worthy household of that latter country, there are* too many of them *among the children, either male or female, so many that, if the paternal inheritance were to be divided among them, as Nature decrees and God commands, the family*

patrimony would be dissipated,—whenever this happens, the parents proceed to get rid of the supernumeraries by packing them off to this island, even though the offspring may happen to be chattels of l'Ile-Bossard.'

" '*Is that,' inquired Panurge, 'the* Ile-Bouchard *near Chinon?'*

" '*I said* Bossard,' *replied Sacristan, 'for ordinarily, they are hunchbackd* (bossus), *one-eyed, lame, one-handed, gout-ridden, misformed, misshapen and altogether a useless burden to the earth.*

" '*I greatly doubt,' continued Sacristan, 'whether their mothers over there bear them nine months in their bellies, in view of the fact that they cannot bear them or suffer them in their households for nine years, or, frequently, even seven. . . . In the same manner, . . . these parents openly, obviously and manifestly make of their offspring such birds as you see here.'* "

Professor Arthur Tilley is inclined to believe that the foregoing passage is Rabelais' own. There is in it, it must be admitted, a note of personal bitterness. On the other hand, the complaint here formulated was by no means an uncommon one among the preachers and moralists of the day. Listen to one of the latter:

"You give to the Lord your abortions, the worst that you have. If there is to be found, among your sons or among your daughters, a child that is lame, hunchbacked, blind in one eye, misshapen, crippled . . . that one, you say, will make a good priest, a monk, a nun . . . and you proceed to offer him or her to God, as one offers a scurvy pig to St. Anthony or a sick hen to St. Valentine." (Méray.)

True, M. Rathery insists that the old canonical rules forbade admitting to the religious profession individuals who were afflicted with bodily infirmities, and he adds that "If the rule was sometimes set aside, this happened but rarely." It would seem, however, that it must have happened rather often to have aroused so much criticism.

What, then, led François Rabelais to turn monk? His father, as has been seen, was well-to-do, and there were but four children; so that this was scarcely a case of either "Breadlessday" or "Toomanyofem." There is no record of François' having manifested any physical infirmity. What, accordingly, is more natural than to assume that, having been put to school with the monks, he experienced at the first what passed for a religious vocation, or was persuaded by his ecclesiastic tutors that he had experienced such a vocation? May it not be that he was attracted to the Church, rather than to the army or to some civil pursuit, by an early love for learning, and in the belief that the Church stood for learning; and that it was only after he had begun to look into his Greek books and to come into contact with the new Humanism that he began to distrust both his calling and those brethren of his, to whom everything was a "matter of breviary," and who viewed everything pertaining to the Greek language and literature as the most rampant of heresies?

These questions probably will never be answered; but we do know that the early education which François received was monastic in source and Scholastic in character.

II

In his *Gargantua*, where the old pedagogic practice and the new educational theory of his day are set forth in some

detail, Rabelais sketches in the old system for us under colour of that instruction which was given his baby giant hero by Tubal Holofernes and Master Jobie (*Jobelin Bridé*). In the definitive edition of 1542, which the author tactfully revised for the press, this chapter (Chapter XIV.) bears the title, "How Gargantua Was Instructed by a Sophist in Latin Literature"; but in the three earlier editions, the title reads: "By a Theologian." It is after the young Gargantua's attainments have been brought into unflattering contrast with those of the Fauntleroyesque Eudemon that Master Jobie is permitted to "drink his fill like a good sophist (theologian) and go forthwith to all the devils in hell." Ponocrates then steps in with his convenient "Anticyrian hellebore," and a transformation is at once effected, a transformation that anticipates some of the best and ripest features of modern pedagogics. We may, then, take Gargantua's regime under his Sophist, or theological, tutors as a specimen of that education which Rabelais himself received, up to the time when the language of Plato and Plutarch began to live for him.

Let us take the texts as they are listed. The first we find is that of the fourth-century Latin grammarian, Aelius Donatus, which was in common school use in the Middle Ages. This work, a drill-book in the parts of speech, had fallen into disrepute, though Erasmus does not appear to think so badly of it. Next come the *Facetus*, the *Theodulus* and the "*Alanus in Parabolis*," these works forming part of a collection known as the "Eight Moral Authors," which was in use in the schools down to the middle of the sixteenth century. The *Facetus* taught the small-boy commonplaces of good manners; the *Theodulus*, attributed to a fifth-century

Bishop of Syria of the same name, was an attempt to reconcile classic mythology and Holy Writ; the Alanus in *Parabolis*, or *Liber Parabolarum*, was the work of Alain de Lille, a doctor of the University of Paris, and was a collection of moral distichs and quatrains, for use in school exercises. Next, we have the *De Modis Significandi*, a work of theoretical grammar which enjoyed a great vogue in the Middle Ages. It was variously attributed to Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus and others, and was cited by Erasmus as a work which made the dull duller still. This opinion is reflected in that of Regis, Rabelais' German translator, who terms it a "*Barbarische Buch.*" The infant Gargantua, we are told, became so adept that "he would prove to his mother, on his fingers, that *de modis significandi non erat scientia!*" To the text which his hero used, Rabelais' imagination added the fanciful "commentaries of Licketycut (*Hurtebize*), Stoopandfetchit (*Fasquin*), Toomany (*Tropditeuxl*), Gualehaul, John Calf, Woodennickel (*Billonio*), Pussybumper (*Brelinguandus*) and a lot of others."—

"And he was at this more than eighteen years and eleven months. And he knew them all so well that, at school contests, he could say them by heart, backwards."

Next came the *Almanac*, "when his preceptor died." Followed then the *Liber Derivationum* of Ugutio, native of Pisa and twelfth-century Bishop of Ferrara; this was a treatise on Latin roots. Everard's *Graecismus*, a vocabulary by a thirteenth-century Bishop of Béthune, received its name from the fact that its first chapters were devoted to Latin words taken from the Greek. The "*Parts*" (*De Octo Partibus Orationis*) was a work on the parts of speech. As a school proverb had it: "*Qui nescit Partes, in vanum*

tendit ad artes"—"He who does not know his *Parts* strives in vain for the arts." The *Quid Est* was a school question and answer book, a sort of grammatical catechism. The *Supplementum*, or Supplement, might have been any one of a number of works bearing that title—parodied by Rabelais as "*Supplementum Supplementi Chronicorum*"—the "Supplement to the Supplement," etc. The *mamotrectus* (or *Mammotreptus*)—another title parodied by Rabelais in the St. Victor catalogue—was a religious text for the instruction of youth. Dating from about the middle of the fifteenth century, it ran through many editions at the end of the century and became a target for Erasmus in the latter's Colloquoy, the *Synodus Grammaticorum*. Next comes the *De Moribus in Mensa Servandis*, a manual of table manners by Sulpizio de Veroli, who lived at the end of the fifteenth century. (This, it may be seen, was a comparatively up-to-date textbook.) There was the *De Quatuor Virtutibus Cardinalibus*, or treatise on the Four Cardinal Virtues, a work attributed to Seneca, but the real author of which was a Portuguese cleric, Martin of Braga, Bishop of Mondonedo in the sixth century. As for Gargantua's "*Passavantus cum commento*," this may have been some school version of the *Specchio della Vera Penitenza* ("Mirror of True Repentance") of Iacobo Passavanti, a Florentine monk of the fourteenth century. The *Specchio* was greatly admired by the Italians themselves for the Tuscan purity of its style; like all pretentious works of the period, it carried a glossary ("*cum commento*"). This glossary habit is frequently parodied by Rabelais, as in the list of fictitious works he gives in the Prologue to the *Gargantua:* "Peas and Bacon *cum com-*

mento," etc. Finally, we have the *Dormi Secure*, a collection of ready-made sermons for preachers, so that the latter might be able to *sleep in peace*. It was many times reprinted at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries. An allusion to it will be found in the old French *Farce des Theologastres* and in Henri Estienne's *Apologie pour Hérodote*, while G. Bouchet takes the title with a mock-literalness: "And as though it had been a feast-day, or as if they had just finished reading the sermons of the *Dormi Secure* which are read on holy days, they gave no sign whatever of waking up."

Oh, yes, in this rather lengthy list, we have inevitably forgotten one work, and that is Gargantua's "*Doctrinal*." This was the *Doctrinale Puerorum* of Alexandre de Villedieu, a thirteenth-century grammarian who wrote in leonine verse for school use. By the end of the fifteenth century, this text had fallen into considerable disrepute; in a grammar published by the elder Aldus in 1501, it is referred to as a "*carmen ineptum*"; and in the uproarious *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, Wilhelm Lamp, Cologne master-of-arts, composes a "*metrum epigrammaticum*" in honour of the author, who has just been dubbed a (*Asinus Parisiensis*) by another person present.

All these texts, it is to be noted, were works which had enjoyed a vogue in their time, but which were rapidly being discredited by the advent of the New Learning. The exponents of the New Learning, however, did not always agree among themselves as to which texts might be retained and which should be sent to the scholastic dust-bin. Rabelais, in after years, liked to laugh at them all, but Erasmus was more critically discriminating. The latter, while he makes

Ugutio a champion of barbarism, lists Alexandre de Villedieu as among the "tolerable authors."

Another text which Rabelais does not mention here, but which he must have encountered in the schoolroom, was the *Liber Cathonis* (*Catonis Disticha*), a third-century collection of copybook maxims attributed to Cato the Censor. The texts of these old enchiridia are, unfortunately, hard to come upon now, being only to be met with in the great libraries of Europe, since, as a rule, they have not been reprinted after the sixteenth century. One of them, however, is available in reprint for the modern reader of Latin, and that is the *Catonis Disticha,* or the "*Catonet*" (edition of M. Joseph Nève). Suppose we have a look at this work.

A first, hasty glance is enough to convince us that morals and copybooks do not change. What we have here is a collection of brief, epigrammatic, three-or-four-word admonitions to right doing and right thinking, followed by several groups of highly moral Distichs which not Eddy of Detroit or the American Magazine could better. The author, whoever he may have been, begins by providing us with the moralist's usual condescending back-pat, by way of introduction:

Having observed that a great many persons are inclined to err grievously in the path of morals, I have thought to set them in the way of right thinking and goodly reputation, in order that they may live as praiseworthy a life as possible and attain that meed of honour which is their due. And, so my well beloved son, I shall proceed to instruct you in the morals which should govern your mind. Read, therefore, my precepts; and so read that you may understand

them; since to read (legere) *and not to comprehend* (intelligere) *is but to neglect* (neclegere).

We then have an initial dose of morals in two-word capsules:

Deo supplica.	(*Pray God.*)
Parentes ama.	(*Love your parents.*)
Cognatos cole.	(*Cherish your kin.*)
Datum serva.	(*Guard what is given you.*)

All this is more than a little reminiscent of sententious literature for children the world over. Compare, for example, the German: *Was der Vater will, Was die Mutter spricht, Das befolge still, Warum? Frage nicht!* And when, a little further along, we come upon such an exhortation as "*Quod satis est, dormi,*"—"Get what sleep you need,"—we are reminded of the Spanish (that nation which appears to have a dread and a distrust of sleep) and their "*Quien mucho duerme, poco aprende*"—"He who sleeps much learns little." It is, indeed, in the literature, and particularly in the poetry, of the Iberic peninsula that this sententious impulse would seem to have lingered longest.

Reading on, and translating as we go, we meet with such gems as: "Keep good company"; "Keep clean"; "Be mindful of your own affairs"; "Love your mate"; "Be sparing with wine"; "Fight for your country"; "Flee the scarlet woman" (*Meretricem fuge*); "Read books"; "Remember what you read"; "Shun dice"; "Learn your lessons"; "Never tell a lie"; "Speak little in company"; "Never laugh at the misfortune of another"; "Do not covet what belongs to another."

And then, the Distichs. Here is a sample:

Ne timeas illam, quae vitae est ultima finis:
Qui mortem metuit, quod vivit, perdit id ipsum.

Which may be rendered as:

Do not fear that which is life's final end:
Fear death while living you lose life itself.

The quality of the verse, it will be seen, is up to copybook standard. Here are a few more:

Shun luxury and the crime of avarice,
For they are reputation's greatest foes.

Do not in wrath o'er doubtful things contend,
For wrath prevents the mind from seeing truth.

When Venus holds you thralled to damning lust,
Do not indulge your gullet, the belly's friend.

Be wary of a wife for sake of dower,
Nor strive to hold her once she would be gone.

The young François may have copied out, in a schoolboy's painful scrawl, just such maxims as these; for, like Gargantua, he doubtless "had been taught to write in Gothic letters, and copied out all of his books by hand." Only, with the advent of the art of printing, the old "Gothic" handwriting was fast falling into desuetude; Rabelais and the other Humanists were to adopt the Italian script. François may, however, have carried around with him a

writing-desk, which, if it did not weigh 700,000 pounds, and if the pen-rack of it was not "as big as the great pillars of Ainay," was still sufficient of a burden for a young lad.

It is likely that the instruction which François received was very largely oral in character, with an unwholesome stress on the rôle of memory, a stress on the part of the mediæval schoolmaster which is to be found surviving even in the reformed, Renaissance system of Rabelais' Ponocrates. Like Ponocrates' ward, François was probably *read to*, more often than he himself did any reading. The stunt then was to repeat back, in as glib and efficiently parrot-like a manner as possible, what had been dinned into young ears. "*Repetitio mater studiorum*," the Jesuits said, a dictum which was altered to run: "*Repetitio mater stupidorum*"; Rabelais and the other Humanists appear to have held with the Jesuits; and the "memory exercise," in truth, has lingered down to a very late date in the history of education.

A point to which attention scarcely needs be called is the fact that the education of the day was conducted almost exclusively in Latin; and this custom the early Revival of Learning, with its respect for classical antiquity, tended to confirm,—a custom which may be traced down to the modern Leipzig thesis. Latin was employed, not merely in the schoolroom, but upon the playground; and it was with a blush of shame that the scholar-to-be, the *clericus addiscens*, was compelled to address his own mother in the "vulgar tongue"—she, poor soul, had not had "advantages." We learn this from the Preface to Maturin Cordier's *De Corrupti Sermonis Emendatione;* and Cordier also tells us that speaking the "vernacular" is a small-boy sin, to be classed with lying and cursing. Cordier is a case in point:

while endeavouring to reform the Latin spoken in the schools, he insisted absolutely that Latin must be the language employed.

But what of the playground François, the François outside the schoolroom? Did he, too, apologize for addressing his mother in the rich, succulent dialect of Touraine and Poitou? What games did he play with "the other little children of the country?"

The answer to the last question is easy enough. He played the same games, many of them, that Gargantua did (see Book First, Chapter XXII.): Hopscotch, a pastime that dates back at least as far as Ovid; various forms of cards, chess, checkers and backgammon; variations of the modern mumble-peg, dice and ninepins; "old shoe"; antecedents of the contemporary whipcracker and tug-of-war; ball games; bird and animal mimic-games; "London Bridge" (*pontz cheuz*) and "New York" (*mestiers*); pinching, slapping, tickling and knuckle-rapping diversions; coasting games; "Blow the Coal" and "Squirrel"; different forms of hide-and-seek and blindman's-buff; fool-killer games; jackstraws and marbles; top-games; varieties of tag; lacrosse; "eeny-meeny-miny-mow"; etc.; etc.

Many of these games persist, in one form or another, today; and many of them go back to a remote antiquity. Only one or two, possibly, such as "Fine and Fair Is Lent" and "I've Caught You without the Green," have lost something of their timeliness. Rabelais, in this list, is displaying his erudition (a fashionable proceeding in those days) by drawing up an Homeric catalogue of the amusements of an amusement-loving age. An erotic significance, in many instances, has been read into this list by Rabelais' British

translator, Sir Thomas Urquhart; reading Urquhart, one gets an impression of a certain underlying eroticism for the whole; whereas, the fact is, most of these are just such games as children have played from time that was not. A few of them, it is true, may possess an excremental character; but children's minds sometimes turn that way. And in other cases, as in that of the pastime known as *ventre contre ventre*, an erotic meaning has later been given to what was in origin a simple childish sport. It is probably safe to say that, of these 217 diversions, not a one is distinctly erotic in genesis.

But this is not the point. The point is, François Rabelais must have played and loved games to know them so well; for his erudition here does not smell of the study—it is very close to life. We may, then, picture him as playing "Squirrel" and attempting to put out a lighted torch with his nose, as playing "Chase the Hare" (a game which Froissart mentions) or "The Little Pig Goes First." And occasionally,—who knows?—he may have indulged in the naughtier "Beard of Gold" (*barbe d'oribus*) or "Draw the Spit." And when he met with parental reproof, did he, conceivably, argue the point in his best schoolroom Latin?

For the question naturally arises here: Did François grow up a Little Lord Fauntleroy type, like the sleek-haired, rosy-mouthed, self-possessed Eudemon, page of Ville-Gongis, who "rather resembled a little angel than a human being"? Or did he, rather, imitate Gargantua by "bawling like a cow" in company. The Eudemon type was vastly admired at the time, and in the prim little set speech which he makes, Eudemon is merely following the instructions laid down in a work entitled *L'Art et Science de Bien Parler*,

published along about the year 1500. In this treatise, we find the following directions for young parlor-entertainers:

> *Garde toy de parler en teurdant nez ne bouche,*
> *Ne de mains ne de bras jamais autre ne touche,*
> *Et tiens droicte ta face, simple, ferme et estable:*
> *Si sera ta parole a tous plus agreable.*

It was on account of the unfavourable contrast with Eudemon that Gargantua's regime was altered. Was it because his young son failed to preserve a face that was "*simple, ferme et estable*" that Antoine Rabelais sent the latter to be a monk, and not only a monk, but a mendicant monk, a member of the Grey or Begging Friars? Somewhat as, today, an incorrigible sprig is sometimes packed off to sprout in military school? "*Cordigerum esse vult pater,*"—"His father wanted him to be a Grey Friar,"—says one of Rabelais' early and, on the whole, very faithful biographers, Antoine Leroy, in his *F. Rabelaesii Gesta* (*Floretum Philosophicum:* Paris, 1649). Why?

In any event, a Grey Friar he became.

CHAPTER THREE

"FROM FEAR OF THE MUMPS"

Do you happen to know Friar Claude of the Hauts-Barrois? Oh, what a fine fellow he is! But I don't know what's eating him now. He does nothing but study, since I don't know when. For my part, I don't study at all. In our abbey, we never study, from fear of the mumps. Our late abbot used to say that it is a monstrous thing to see a learned monk. By God, sir, my friend, magis magnos clericos non sunt magis magnos sapientes.

Book First, Chapter XXXIX.

I

RABELAIS' life, the truth is, lies in documentary darkness up to the year 1520, when, assuming that he was born in 1494, he had attained the age of twenty-six. The first document in the case is Rabelais' autograph letter to Budé which has been previously referred to, the authenticity of which is now generally accepted. The date of this letter is March 4, 1521; and from it we see that, for a period of at least five months, François had been a Franciscan of Puy-Saint-Martin, at Fontenay-le-Comte, in Bas-Poitou. The date which in the past has been assigned for his assumption of the Minorite habit is 1511, the authority brought forward

being the *Trésor Chronologique* of Pierre de Saint-Romuald (1647); but there is nothing to support this doubtful evidence, any more than there is to support the assertion that it was in the year preceding, 1510, that Rabelais went to La Baumette. We do not know whether or not he was ever at La Baumette; and we also do not know precisely at what date he went to Fontenay-le-Comte; and that is the truth of the matter, so far as documents and any chronology that is based upon documents are concerned.

But Rabelais did become a priest and a friar; so much is certain. And to become a member of the clergy, he must have followed the usual pre-sacerdotal course of instruction. In other words, in addition to his *Donatus*, his *Facetus* and his *Alanus in Parabolis*, he must have had a thorough drilling—and to judge by the degree to which he absorbed it, a grilling—in scholastic philosophy.

At that time, the two shining lights of Franciscan Scholasticism were Duns Scotus and St. Bonaventura. Scotus, indeed, the "Subtle Doctor," in that theology coming out of the fourteenth century, had come to occupy the place in the order which Bonaventura had held in the thirteenth century. In Rabelais' day, he was the head and fountain-source of one of the two great systems of philosophy, the other being the Nominalism of the English Occam. Our young theologue, accordingly, could not well avoid being soaked in his teachings—and not only the teachings of Scotus, but those of his commentators, as well, such as Pierre Tartaret and Étienne Brulefer. And this immersion which he received was destined to colour his whole future thinking and the workings of his mind. Anatole France, I believe it was, had something to say about there always

being something of a clerical tang to Rabelais' jests, his humour. Not only that, Maître François' mind itself remained, in very large part, what it was formed and shaped to be in youth: a clerical mind, turned inward upon and jesting at itself.

Later, as Rabelais came into contact with that great and growing new heresy, the love of Greek, he was to guffaw valorously at his early masters; and we find him alluding to "the Scribblings of Scotus" (*Barbouilamenta Scoti*), and attributing to Tartaret, a respected Sorbonne theologian, a work the title of which is a little too broad for modern taste: the "*De Modo Cacandi.*" Nothing could be more slighting than the manner in which "Master John of Scotland's" opinion is rung in at the conclusion of that famous chapter which describes the young Gargantua's marvellous "invention." Such references are thickly strewn throughout Rabelais' work, and Dr. Freud might find some enlightenment in them. Take the Library of St. Victor, Book Second, Chapter VII. This chapter, which makes such merry reading today as it doubtless did when it was written, is nothing more or less than a well-aimed satire on the most formidable theological arsenal of an age; and we are to remember that Rabelais himself, probably, on more than one occasion, had made use of the Library and consulted the very works which he is here taking off. It is not without reason that we find in his writings, now a squib on the litany and now a play on the "Achilles," or invincible argument of the schools, alongside such reminiscences of an earlier, more elementary schooling as an occasional transformed tag from the *Facetus* or a distich from the *Liber Cathonis*.

M. Jean Plattard, in his extremely valuable work on

Rabelais' sources and method of composition, has taken pains to trace these Scholastic influences in some little detail.

"Even," says M. Plattard, "at a period in life when he affected to disdain Scholasticism, Rabelais preserved the imprint of it. In the first place, the technical language of this philosophy is constantly slipping into his book, and not only into the narrator's own remarks, but even into those of his characters. The good folks of Seuilly, whom he pictures for us as stretched out upon the thick grass of the 'Willow Grove,' among their flagons, spits, goblets and hams, mingle with their 'Drunkards' ' remarks axioms drawn from the Thomist philosophy and jesting allusions to the Scholastic definition of eternity."

When one of the "Drunkards" (in Chapter V. of the *Gargantua*), for example, indulges in what we today would term a "wise-crack," to the effect that "The soul never inhabits a dry spot," he is not merely wise-cracking; he is quoting St. Augustine: "*Anima certe, quia spiritus est, in sicco habitare non potest.*" And throughout the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel*, we are constantly coming upon allusions to the *Suppositiones*, the *Exponibilia*, the *Conditionales*, the *Parva Logicalia* and the *Insolubilia*. In Book Third, Chapter XXX., we read:

Gentlemen, there is only one subject up for discussion. Should I marry or should I not? If you are unable to find a solution for my problem, I shall look upon it as insoluble, —quite as insoluble as the Insolubilia de Alliaco.

The reference here, of course, is to Pierre d'Ailly, of whose "Insolubles" Le Duchat gives us one sample: "Is a

pig that is being driven to market held by a man or by a rope?" (*An Porcus qui ad venalitium agitur ab homine an a funiculo teneatur?*) A little further down, in the same chapter:

"Good God!" cried Panurge, "but that's a lot of help! What's the idea, you fellows? You are sending me to the conditionals of dialectics, those catch-alls for contradictions and impossibilities. If my transalpine mule were to fly, my transalpine mule would have wings. If it is God's will, I shall not be a cuckold; I shall be a cuckold, if it is God's will."

In the "Philosophical Cream" (*Cresme Philosophalle*), which was formerly attributed to Rabelais, but which is not his work, we have a fair sample of those "Encyclopedic Questions" which were once "Sorbonicolificabilitudinissimally discussed" in the schools of France. Such exercises as these, together with such themes as that of the "dissolution of continuity"—see the rowdy tale in the fifteenth chapter of the Second Book—afforded the humourist quite too good an opportunity to be passed up, and he did not pass it up. At the same time, the humourist himself possibly did not realize—or did he?—the extent to which he had become identified with the object of his jibes.

An example of the manner in which Rabelais makes use of the Scholastic dialectic will be found in the tenth chapter of the *Gargantua*, the chapter bearing the title: "What Is Signified by the Colours Blue and White." Just as he condemns punning with a pun, so does our author, while making the "sophists" his butt, manifest a keen relish for a good

sophism neatly turned. The whole jolly, if a bit recondite, Bridlegoose episode in the Third Book is, in reality, an expansive play on the two-word legist phrase, "*alea judiciorum,*" the hazards (literally, the dice) of judgments. Compare the passage (Book Third, Chapter II.) in which "Panurge Praises Debtors and Borrowers," and compare the allusions to "commutative" and "distributive" justice in the chapter just preceding. Rabelais has an insuperable taste for paradox and revels in an exhibition of his own cleverness. Something he owes to such masters as Lucian and Erasmus, but the influence of Scholasticism on his literary style alone is not readily to be overestimated. We find him building up long-winded arguments on a mere association of language or of sound, an assonance or a tag of thought, as in the "Remarks of the Drunkards" in the *Gargantua* or the Baysecul-Humevesne trial in the Second Book. Yet another manifestation of the same influence is Rabelais' passion for exactitude in the matter of persons, places, etc., even where, as frequently, there is no call for him to be exact—a passion which can only derive from his early Scholastic training, just as his mock-exactitude in the matter of numbers is a derivative of the *Grandes Cronicques*, the source-book on which he drew.

The fact would seem to be that, while he laughs at "Master John" and his "Scribblings," at Peter Lombard and his "Pot of Proverbs" (the *Liber Sententiarum*) and at Pierre d'Ailly and his "Insolubles,"—while he affects a contempt for the formalism and the pedantry of these Scholastics and their teachings,—the fact apparently is that he was aware of, and quite unable to escape, the dialectic power

inherent in Aristotelian logic and in its thirteenth-century expression, Scholasticism.

II

At Fontenay-le-Comte, then, we may picture François as going through those classroom exercises which were the order of the day. These took the form, chiefly, of oral argumentation; for this was the day of the thesis, in the original acceptation of that term. Descriptions have come down to us of some of these debates; and weird as well as lively affairs they were. On the one side was the pale and sweating "Propugnator," engaged in defending, with all the elusive subtlety at his command, the propositions which he had set forth; and on the other were his equally determined assailants. The combat was a deadly one, and if blood did not flow, words did. And it must have been in some such fray as this that Rabelais made his first acquaintance with the "*Achilles Invincibilis.*"

That any system as it becomes widespread and popularized tends to fall into abuse is, one might say, a truism; and Scholasticism was no exception. The earnest follower of Freud today will be the first to tell you how the Doctrine has been garbled by every Kansas schoolma'arm and neglected wife, with a "complex" or a "repression" to air; but he would deny that such a state of affairs invalidates the teaching itself. For all save a few more enlightened monks in Rabelais' time, all learning had come to be summed up in Friar John's "breviary," by which is meant, in general, the routine of Scholastic instruction. Friar John is a portrait of the monastic inmate as his creator had found and

known him, a portrait sketched in, Prof. Lefranc believes, after some monk of Seuilly or elsewhere whom Rabelais had known at close range. Friar John regards Friar Claude as fallen from a state of grace, when the latter unaccountably takes to his books. "In our abbey, we never study, from fear of the mumps." And a learned monk was, in all literalness, looked upon as "a monstrous thing."

As for the monastery itself, Fontenay-le-Comte had been founded in 1321, by the will of Sebrand Chabot, Sieur de la Grève. It was situated in the Chemin du Gros-Noyer, the present rue du Puy-Saint-Martin, near the present hôtel de ville. Up to 1415, it had belonged to the Franciscan province of Touraine, but had later been placed under a separate rule. It had been the seat of a provincial chapter in 1472 and of a chapter-general in 1457. The only monk belonging to this convent with whose name we are familiar, prior to Rabelais' time, is one Philippe Bertin; and he was a heretic, his punishment being recorded in a document (the Fillon Autographs) of May 7, 1448.

Some stir was made, in the middle of the last century, regarding the "discovery" of an autograph signature of Rabelais' on a supposed bill of purchase drawn up by the brothers of the monastery. This document was also supposed to bear the signature of one Artus Coultant, identified as the "Brother Arthur Wigglebutt" of Book Third, Chapter XVIII. The "discovery" was made public, along with Rabelais' "signature," in a small provincial paper, by M. Benjamin Fillon, then half-journalist and half-archæologist, but who later was to win a place for himself as an antiquarian. M. Fillon let it be understood that the document in question was where he could lay hands upon it at any

time he chose to do so, but he refrained from publishing it during his lifetime; and after his death, M. Henri Clouzot and other archivists failed to find any trace of it. It is also significant that M. Fillon, in communicating a number of other pieces of information to M. A. de Montaiglon, one of the leading Rabelaisian editors of the day, failed to mention this important "find." And now, M. Clouzot upsets the whole pretty little tale by pointing out that François, as a member of the Franciscan order and vowed to poverty, would have been legally incapable of affixing his signature to any such document. It would seem that M. Fillon, for once, had been more journalist than archæologist. In any case, the identification of one of our author's charming characters as a companion of his Fontenay-le-Comte days is, as we would say, "shot."

We are in possession of no information as to how François conducted himself inside—or outside!—of cloister walls, up to the time when he breaks into the light as one of the new-fangled Hellenic heretics. If we believe Pierre de Saint-Romuauld, who has been cited above, his conduct was none too creditable:

It was about this time that François Rabelais of Chinon, son of a Tavern-Keeper, took the habit of Grey Friar at Fontenay-le-Comte; but inasmuch as he was possessed of a jovial and clowning disposition, he did not remain long in this Convent, being looked upon as a frequenter of those places which the law calls disrespectable (tristes); *and so, he soon threw his frock to the dogs.*

. . . . . .

He had been, in his youth, a Grey Friar at Fontenay-

le-Comte in Poitou, and he had even been in pace *there, on account of certain important misdemeanors* (friponneries) *which he had committed; but some of President Brisson's relatives took a certain pleasure in this chap's clowning humour, and they had him withdrawn from his Convent, in order that he might enter the Order of St. Benedict at Maillezais.*

We are here dealing with the old anecdotal school of Rabelais biography, which is no longer considered trustworthy. (The "President Brisson" referred to is Barnabé Brisson, an advocate of Poitou, of whom we shall hear more in connection with Rabelais' Poitiers period.) Are we to assume, then, that young François had deliberately elected the monastic life on account of the freedom which he might be able to filch from under his robe and "top-knot"? See Friar John's remarks at the dinner-table with reference to the virtues of his frock. "For many a one goes clad in monastic garb who, on the inside, is anything but a monk." Could Rabelais have purposed to "leave a little wool behind him"? Was he like those "schoolboys of Trebizond," who, according to the Little Devil of Popefiggery, "leave their fathers and mothers, give up all thought of the public welfare, defy the edicts of their King and live in subterranean liberty, despising one another and jibing at everybody, and taking the little-red-riding-hood of poetic innocence by becoming nice little Goblins"?

These questions, needless to explain, are almost purely rhetorical. Rabelais' first recorded conflict with authority was the result of no less heinous an offence than looking into Homer, or one of Homer's countrymen; and a youth—even

a youth of the ventripotent sixteenth century—who fights for the privilege of mastering aorists is not likely to have a great deal of time on his hands for frequenting "those places which the law calls disrespectable."

The New Learning was abroad in the land.

CHAPTER FOUR

"FOR THE LOVE OF GREEK"

Ὄγε πολλα νῦν καὶ δεινὰ πεπονθὼς ὑπὲρ τοῦ τῶν ἑλληνικῶν ἔρωτος.

LETTER OF BUDÉ TO RABELAIS

I

As François Rabelais, clad in the cinctured ash-hued robe of the Minorite order, paced the cloistered walks of Fontenay-le-Comte with bare or sandaled feet, as the rule of the order prescribed, he himself quite conceivably may have wondered how he came to be there. As the modern behaviouristic fictionist knows, and will take 400 pages to tell us, the patterns which a life assumes are not necessarily volitional or even conscious ones in their inception, consciousness being oftentimes later achieved through the painful press of circumstance on the nerve of rebellious sense. But all this is taking a sentence or a volume to express a fact of daily observation: that human beings are inclined to drift.

In our drifting, however, we like as a rule to preserve an illusion of direction (the Ibsenic life-lie of the species, if you like), even though the direction may have been a vague and wavering one; and the best way to acquire this illusion

would appear to be by looking backward—the Proustian *recherche du temps perdu*. And so, it is altogether possible that François, as he took his cloister stroll, an unread breviary in his hands and his ears filled with the "*ne*, *tum*, *ne*, num, num" of his brother-monks' litany as it was wafted to him from the chapel, fell to thinking of those great lights of the Order of St. Francis: Bonaventura the Seraphic, Scotus the Subtle, Roger the Admirable, Alexander the Irrefragable: lights which had shone so resplendently for a century or two, and which are glowing again today with a renewed radiance, undimmed by evolution trials and Fundamentalist controversies, but rather with a veridic luminousness conferred upon them by hard-headed scientists in the laboratory; but lights which, during the earlier years of the youthfully self-sufficient Renaissance, had undergone an undeserved eclipse in the writings of Eramus and the other Humanists, who, in the pride of their new-won classics, gave their preference to the patristic Augustine and Jerome, Hilary and Irenaeus.

Nevertheless, it may have been just such names as these which had lured the young François, avid of learning. For while the Franciscan Order had a reputation, in certain quarters, of being the most benighted of all the monastic societies, we are to remember that this reputation was very largely due to the superior jibes of the Humanists, new-rich in secular erudition. Outside of such circles, the truth is, the impression was not general. The monastic life, moreover, offered certain undeniable advantages to a youth of studious bent, and these may not have been without their weight. It may even have been the antiquity of the Fontenay-le-Comte foundation (dating back to the early years of the four-

teenth century) which had led to the selection of this monastery rather than one nearer home, such as Mirebeau, Cholet or Clisson.

As for the cloistered life itself, it was not, perhaps, the one best suited to the high- and animal-spirited François, who was, one might assume, better adapted to the "muscular Christianity" of the late Charles Kingsley. But here again, how was an inexperienced lad to have foreseen that the watching of a convent clock would prove quite as irksome as the following of the dial-hands in a modern business office does to the boy just out of school? That it did prove irksome, we see from one of the reforms which Maître François introduces into his gay and visionary Abbey of Thélème:

And since in other convents, everything is run, ruled and fixed by hours, it was decided that in this one there should not be any clock or dial of any sort, but whatever work there was should be done whenever occasion offered. For as Gargantua remarked, the greatest loss of time he knew was to watch the hands of a clock. What good came of it? It was the greatest foolishness in the world to regulate one's conduct by the tinkling of a timepiece, instead of by intelligence and good common sense.

Whether he liked it or not, François was there, and there to stay it seemed. Whatever his feelings in the matter may have been, whether he was glad to be there or sorry, he appears to have been given a complete immersion in life behind the convent wall; for this capability of being immersed in life wherever he found it is a characteristic which is to become more and more salient in the course of this biography. And

Rabelais, as we have already seen, would seem to have derived more humour than bitterness from the experience. He could not have avoided listening to the friars' table-talk, and he there not only learned why monks like to be in the kitchen, but he also imbibed many a metaphor from the "Cloistral Frying Pan" and caught more than one snatch of song:

Brevis oratio penetrat caelos;
Longa potatio evacuat scyphos.

Which, being translated, is: "A short prayer penetrates the skies; but a prolonged drinking-bout evacuates the cups." With this, compare:

Monachus in claustro
Non valet ova duo;
Sed quando est extra,
Bene valet triganta.

"A monk in the cloister is not worth a pair of eggs; but when he is out, he's worth all of thirty." These monastic reminiscences are almost innumerable in Rabelais' work; quotations from the Bible as well as from the litany are numerous, and even the commentators of the Scriptures, such as the "delirious" De Lyra, are whipped into jovial service.

There can be no question that Rabelais found a hearty amusement in his environment; any of his readers who fails to perceive the zestful humour which the author extracts from the theme would have to be woefully lacking in humour himself. And it may be that, at first, the humour of

the situation was enough, and François was quite content. The thing sometimes happens. Toss a youth of today or any day into boarding-school, college or any new surroundings, and the sheer novelty is likely to keep him amused—"interested," as his guardians would say—for a period. If the environment is an hilarious one, and the youngster in the case chances to be of an hilarious disposition, he may fall in with it in something like permanent fashion; if he is not of a favouring disposition, there is likely to be friction later. Our contemporary Greek-letter societies have been known to make grave mistakes in their pledges; and the pledges have been known to make even graver ones. Had François been possessed only of a healthy animality, a side on which he undoubtedly was not lacking, all might have been well, and he might have found the way of the little brothers of St. Francis by no means a hard one to follow—"*beati immaculati in via*"—blessed are the undefiled in the way—in Friar John's way, the way to the kitchen. For all the Minorites, needless to say, were not Angelic or Seraphic; saints do not occur every day, else there would be no saints: the distinction would be meaningless. And even in an order noted for the brilliancy of its intellectual firmament, intellectuals, we may grant, must have been in the minority. Now, François Rabelais happened to possess an actively functioning intelligence; and we may readily imagine that, however much amusement he may have found in the company of a Friar John Hackem, the conversation of the latter (of which we have a fair sample in Chapter XXXIX. of the *Gargantua*) must have palled upon him at times. There is, too, such a thing as fashions in learning; and youth—those, today, of an age which we of a settling gen-

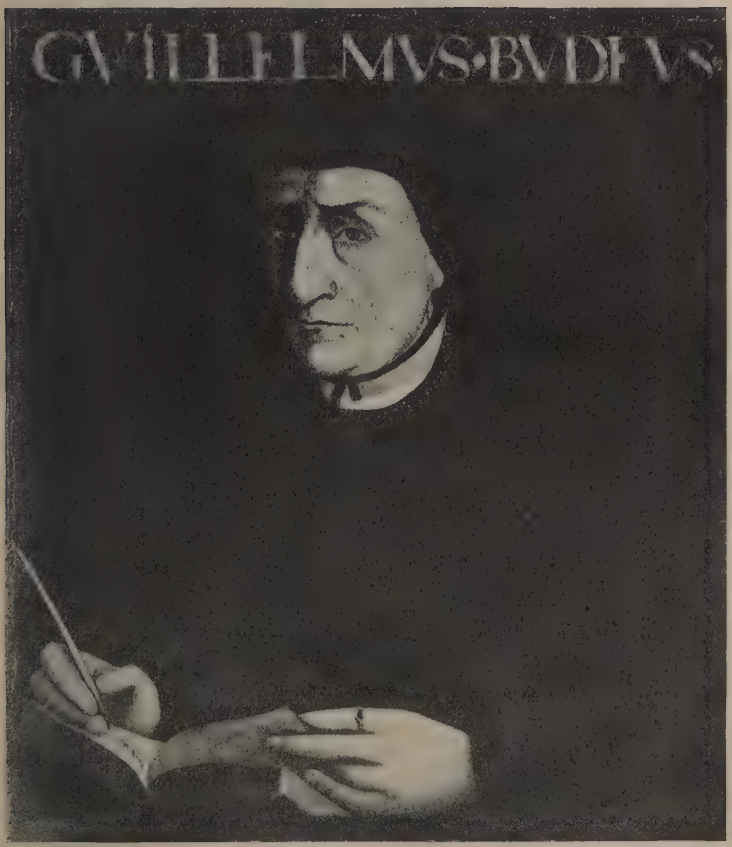
eration are inclined to describe, a bit patronizingly, as "sophomoric"—is quite apt to fall out with the old and in with the new. In Rabelais' century, our hypothetic young fellow turned Humanist; in our own, he is more than likely to join the Communist Party.

There was, as always, a personal factor in the equation; since in a convent, prison-pen or at a social tea, like seeks like and somehow finds it. In Rabelais' case, the personal element was provided by his cloistral companion, Pierre Amy. (Rabelais, by the way, spells the name Amy, and not Lamy, as Anatole France and other writers have it.) Whether it was Amy who kindled the love of Greek in François' mind, or whether the former merely brought fuel to a flame that was already aglow, we have no means of saying. In any event, things were happening in the outer world, and happening rather rapidly; and inasmuch as they were events which were to influence the destiny of humanity for some centuries to come, their reverberation could not well escape being heard, and the backwash of their influence felt, even within the cloister. It is with a letter dated March 4, 1521, that the shadows begin to lift a little from the life of François Rabelais; and from this letter we learn that Rabelais had been at Fontenay-le-Comte for at least five months, or since October, 1520. And it was on the tenth day of December, 1520, that Martin Luther posted up a notice inviting the students of Wittenberg to witness the burning of the papal bull, the *Exurge Domine*. At the same time, the new passion for Greek studies, coming in from the South, was spreading, in the words of Varillas, "like a veritable contagion"; and it is not strange, therefore, if the two currents, one coming from Italy and the other from Germany, came to be con-

fused in the popular mind, and even in minds that prided themselves upon being something more than popular. Erudition, as a result, was accused of aiding and abetting the "revolt of the intelligence"; while Leroy, in his Life of Budé, tells us that Greek was looked upon as the root and seed of all evil ("*stirps et semen omnium malorum*"), and we find even the gentle Amyot accused of being an out-and-out heretic.

Hellenism in France, it is true, was still an arduous pursuit, Greek Masters and Greek books being rare; but something had been done by such men as Lascaris, Hieronymus Aleander and others. From 1508 to 1520, the only printer of Greek books in France was Gilles de Gourmont, and he published only some two dozen books during those twelve years. In spite of all this, the "new humanities" and "the poets" were in the air, and small circles of Hellenists or would-be Hellenists were to be encountered in towns like Fontenay-le-Comte.

At this time, one of the foremost, if not the foremost figure in French Humanism was Guillaume Budé, King's secretary. So ardent an apostle for the classic tongues was Budé that he did not look upon his native French as sufficiently exalted a medium for philosophy, science or belles-lettres. Despite his intense patriotism, he declined to encourage literary composition in the vulgate; and this will account for the fact that, while men like Rabelais and Des Periers still live, the Budés and their kind, who once loomed so much bigger, are now forgotten, save for the excavations of scholars and period-specialists—this, and the disdain which Budé and other Humanists displayed for the art of composition per se. As a scientist, Budé's contributions are



"Surpassing All, in Virtue and in Talent"

(*Portrait of Guillaume Budé, Humanist Leader, Who Encouraged Rabelais and His Friend, Pierre Amy. Musée de Versailles*)

either hopelessly distanced or altogether demoded today, but he performed a very real and invaluable service as a textual critic. And he died seeking a pathway of reconciliation between Christianity and the philosophy of the pagan world.

As for Amy, he came from a family at Orléans, where Hieronymus Aléander had taught, and it was doubtless at Orléans that he had learned Greek. He had, in some manner, struck up a correspondence with Budé; for the embattled Humanists had come to institute a sort of free-masonry among themselves. From a letter of Budé's to Amy, we learn that the latter's father had constrained him to enter the Franciscans; but in the quiet of the cloister, as is evident from the further correspondence of his learned friend, Amy carried on his studies in Aristotelian metaphysics and in philology.

We have spoken, in the preceding paragraph, of Amy's "striking up" an acquaintance with Budé. As a matter of fact, he owed his introduction to the famous scholar to the Humanist Deloynes, who was professor of law in the University at Orléans. Budé, who was noted for his kindness to all who knew or desired to know Greek, sent the young monk long letters, urging the latter to persevere in his philological pursuits. And it was Pierre Amy who was to put Rabelais into touch with the leading scholar of the kingdom.

If it was not the "love of Greek" that first brought François and Pierre together, it was, certainly, their mutual enthusiasm for the language of Hellas that proved to be the bond between them. This brings us to an incident in Rabelais' life, the first of which we possess something in the nature

of a first-hand document, that is marked by a not unamusing schoolboy naïveté. We may imagine some such conversation as this between the two young monks, a conversation translated into the modern schoolboy's idiom:

"Why don't you sit down and write him a letter? He's a good guy; he'll answer."

"Aw, I wouldn't dare do that; I'm afraid."

"Afraid? What's there to be afraid of?"

"I can't write good enough Latin yet. Wait till I polish up a bit."

"Aw, that doesn't make any difference. He likes anybody that goes in for that sort of thing."

"All right, I'll do it. But remember, it's your funeral."

"That's all right. I'll take the responsibility."

And so, François wrote. He wrote (along about October, 1520) what we judge from his own subsequent description to have been a long flowery epistle, ending with a Greek prayer of which François was, probably, particularly proud. Guillaume Budé, being secretary to His Majesty and engaged in following the court about, was, naturally, a busy man. He did not reply to this first letter of François', which must have given the sender some anxious moments, and may even have led to certain half-jocular, half-serious reproaches addressed by Rabelais to his friend, Pierre. It was not long, however, before the great Budé let it be known, through Amy, that he had received the doubtful letter, prayer and all. Rabelais was greatly rejoiced, and on March 4, 1521, we find him inditing a second epistle, which has come down to us (the former one is lost).

It is only of very recent years that this second letter of Rabelais' to Budé has come to be looked upon as an authen-

tic document. The mid-nineteenth-century Rathéry looks gravely askance upon it; Marty-Laveaux in his exhaustive Critical Edition (1868–1903) gives it only in a note; and the author of this biography, in his American translation of Rabelais, decided at the last minute against including it; the weight of present-day authority is, however, convincing. (The complete text will be found, in the original Latin, in Marty-Laveaux or in the *Revue des Études Rabelaisiennes.*) If the letter is not given here, it is for the reason that it is a long one and makes rather dull reading. This is, in general, true of such Humanist correspondence as that of Budé's. Letters like these were chiefly rhetorical exercises, somewhat stilted and lacking in the breath of life. As M. Clouzot observes, there is no vast cause for regret in the loss of such communications.

The letter (now a part of the Morrison Collection at London) bears the superscription: "To Messire Guillaume Budé, King's Secretary at Paris." It begins: "François Rabelais, Franciscan, to Messire Guillaume Budé, Greetings." A paragraph or two will suffice to convey an idea of the tone:

"Our good friend, Pierre Amy, a man (I swear it by the Graces) worthy of being cherished if ever there was one, having insisted that I write you, I have finally yielded to his numerous and persistent entreaties, and have followed his suggestion, taking good care first of all to invoke and pray all the gods to bestow a happy outcome upon this hazardous adventure. Despite my importunate desire (why not admit it?) to gain access to your friendship, and in spite of the fact that I preferred such an advantage to that of reigning over all Asia, I could not but fear that, in seeking

out that goodwill which I propose to gain through the paying of my respects, I might, after all, be disappointed in the attainment of my votive wishes. What was an unknown, with nothing to recommend him, to hope to gain by a letter that was badly turned, without elegance, and even barbarous in expression? What was an uncultivated youth, with no name or experience, and one who was an utter stranger to the art of speaking, to expect from a man renowned for his eloquence, one whose deserts and talents lifted him to a position high above all other men? That is why it is I had thought it my duty to postpone this audacious enterprise to a time when I should have better perfected my style. But Amy being insistent, I have finally set about it, even at the risk of reputation, and at the risk of being classed with those who rely upon another's judgment rather than upon their own."

In the course of his letter, Rabelais alludes, with a somewhat elephantine sportiveness, to his intention of taking legal action against his friend, Amy, in case his epistolary overtures to Budé do not meet with a friendly reception:

"Amy kept dinging the same thing (Budé's kindness) into my ears, in response to the reproaches which, as a result of the uncertain outcome of my adventure, I heaped upon him, holding him responsible for my haste—nay, my rashness—in entering upon it. This gave me the idea of starting proceedings against him, very formidable proceedings, indeed, and such as he might have found some difficulty in getting out of, the least damage he could incur being the loss of all his earthly possessions; since it is quite unthinkable that he should have deserved any less punishment than that . . . for those guilty of having misled the simple-minded, and of

having, in so far as they were able, caused a loss of esteem to the innocent. . . . To tell you the truth, if I were inclined to make use toward my man of all the law's recourses, I cannot see any exception or evasion that would furnish him with a means of escape."

The jest, a lumbering one, should be obvious: "But what if I were to go on and convince you that the whole thing was a conspiracy between us (*Quid si dixero atque probavero id inter nos convenisse*)?" And: "For I had let him know my intent to prosecute, the very moment I resolved to write you." Budé later, in one of his letters to Rabelais, carries on the pleasantry in an equally obvious manner; yet the incident has given the anecdotal biographer the chance to visualize an actual and serious falling-out between François and one of his convent companions.

Rabelais did not have to wait long for an answer this time. Budé replied under date of April 12, 1521. His tone is the same as that of Rabelais' letter,—the ponderous man of learning in a lighter mood. Like Rabelais, he mingles Greek and Latin, and he congratulates his young admirer on the facility with which he handles the two languages. He reproaches François, in the name of St. Francis, for having been lacking in charity toward Amy, and then goes on to play upon the thesis in Roman law which Rabelais' letter had suggested, the whole done with a great show of legal learning. He adds:

"But let the case against your comrade be dismissed, and let me bear the brunt of the proceedings. As a very confident young man, you are astonished that I did not at once reply to your overtures, and you at once become heated over the matter, in the belief that you have been treated

with a lack of consideration. Must I begin by assuring you that this complaint of yours would be a well founded one, if it were not for the fact that illness and stress of work have prevented my writing you?"

The three-cornered correspondence between Budé, Amy and Rabelais lasted over a period of some years, up to 1524, at least. Rabelais' other letters to Budé are lost, and the collected edition of the latter's correspondence contains only two letters to François. Of the second Budé letter, we shall have reason to hear shortly, since it concerns the first dramatic event in Rabelais' life with which we are familiar.

II

While there soon grew up in France a certain antagonism between the Church and the nascent Humanism, and while the latter early came to be associated with the doctrines of Luther, there was yet a period when it seemed that the prelates, so far from being inimical, might even become patrons of the New Learning, as the popes themselves had been in Italy. This was a hope earnestly cherished by a number of the Humanist leaders, among them Budé. The latter, profoundly religious by temperament, looked upon the search for truth, wherever it might lie hidden, even at the bottom of the philosopher's well, as nothing more than a path to Christian perfection. Accordingly, as M. Plattard observes, speaking of Rabelais' attraction as a young monk to the study of Greek, "A Humanistic vocation, at that date, may not have appeared in the least incompatible with the life of a Franciscan." And this is true, if by "that date"

we understand the period preceding the break between the Sorbonne and the Humanist forces.

This break came about the end of the year 1523, with the publication of Erasmus' commentaries on the Greek text of St. Luke. Alarmed by this, the Theological Faculty was still further disturbed by the rapid spread of "evangelic" doctrines, as the teachings of the Reformers had come to be termed. One of the leaders of this new brand of Evangelical Humanism, or Humanistic Evangelicism, who was most feared by the Sorbonnists was Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, who has been called "the dean of French Humanists." To combat the rising heresy, the Sorbonne fell back upon the Scholastic philosophy. This was a natural and instinctive gesture, but possibly an unfortunate one from the pragmatic point of view, for the reason that Scholasticism had somewhile since become a target for Humanist laughter. That laughter still further irritated the theologians, and the battle was on.

The misunderstanding involved was, in reality, this: Certain Humanist scholars, like Erasmus, had begun in perfectly good faith and as perfectly good and sincere Christians, any intention of leaving the Church being the farthest thing from their minds; what they had in mind was a reexamination of ecclesiastic texts in the light of the New Learning, and in order that they might be able to verify to their own intellectual satisfaction those dogmas in which they believed, and, what is more, in which they willed to believe; perhaps, one might say that they were seeking, with St. Augustine, a new and somewhat perilous *intellectualis amor dei.* What was there in all this to lead to excommunications

and anathemas? The answer is very simple: a touch of human, very human, vanity. These higher critics of an earlier day knew Greek and, it must be confessed, were a bit overbearing in the matter of their knowledge. The old-fogey theologues, on the other hand, did not know Greek, and resented the airs put on by the Erasmuses and the Lefèvre d'Étaples. It would, by the way, be interesting to know just how much of the Fundamentalist and anti-Fundamentalist oratory of today has behind it much the same motivation. The upshot of it was, the Sorbonne decided to put a ban on the study of the Greek language in France. And in the Minorite monastery at Fontenay-le-Comte, François Rabelais and his friend, Pierre Amy, found their Greek books taken out of their hands.

When the great Budé heard of this, he was outraged, and, under date of February 25, 1524, wrote Amy a letter of consolation. In this letter, he makes it very plain what the cause of the whole trouble is:

"What an outrage to the Muses, to plague you for the zeal you bring to the study of Greek! How one would like to chastise those superiors of the convent who cultivate ignorance under the name of orthodoxy! It is Erasmus' latest works which have provoked this assault, on the part of the theologians, upon the Greek language. The latter, fortunately, are no longer in good standing at the court, and nothing henceforth shall retard the renaissance of letters."

But before this, Budé had written, on January 27, 1524, to Rabelais himself. After excusing an epistolary silence on the ground that he had not been acquainted with François' place of residence, he goes on:

"I suffered in the sufferings of my two young friends, when you complained of being annoyed by the Coryphaei of the congregation, and of being kept from reading Greek books; but I have learned from a member of the community whom I most cherish, and whom I know to be a lover of the beautiful, that they have restored to the two of you that which you most adore: by which I mean, those books which they arbitrarily took away from you; and I am informed that you are now once more enjoying security and peace."

This letter, as M. Clouzot notes, is less cold and formal than most of Budé's, and contains "a true slice of life." The real reason back of the persecution of these two, after all, unimportant young Franciscans may, perhaps, be gleaned from certain hints dropped in the correspondence of Budé at this time. From these hints, we may surmise that among the works found in François and Pierre's possession were certain of those very writings of Erasmus, writings of a theological and political nature, which were causing all the rumpus. Erasmus at the moment was creating much stir in France, his teachings being suspected of tending toward the new Lutheranism (though, as a matter of fact, they did not). And the Franciscan theologians happened to be leaders on the other side. All this, obviously, somewhat tones down the traditional picture of two ambitious young Humanists being persecuted and hounded by a band of ignorant monks.

There is nothing strange if one side grew righteously indignant over the aggressions of the other, and in Budé's letter to Amy which has been quoted above, the Humanist apostle outdoes himself in the matter of rhetoric:

"O immortal God, Thou who presidest over their holy congregation as Thou dost over our friendship, what news is this which has just reached me? I am informed that you and Rabelais, your Pylades, on account of your zeal in the study of the Greek language, have been vexed and annoyed in countless ways by your brothers, those sworn enemies of all literature and of all elegance. O baneful madness! O incredible insanity! And so those gross and stupid monks have gone so far in their blindness as to persecute with their calumnies those whose learning, acquired within so short a space of time, should be an honour to the whole community! We ourselves have already had certain visual evidence of their senseless fury; we are aware of their attacks on us, as the leader of those who, as they would put it, have fallen a prey to the madness of Hellenism, and we likewise know how they swore to annihilate the cult of Greek literature, which has been but lately revived, to the lasting glory of our age. All the friends of learning stood ready, each to the limit of his power, to come to your aid in this extremity—to your assistance and that of the small number of friars who share your aspirations in the direction of universal knowledge. . . . But I have since learned that your tribulations have ceased, ever since your persecutors learned that they were running in opposition to certain persons of importance, and even to the King himself. And so, you have come out of this test with colours flying, and I trust that you will now return to your tasks with a renewed ardour."

The confiscated books, as we see from the foregoing letter, were returned; and we also see why they were returned.

Certain powerful influence had been brought to bear at court, and even with His Majesty, in behalf of these two obscure Hellenists of the convent; and all "for the love of Greek"—the Humanist free-masonry was functioning.

The ultimate outcome of the affair was, both François and Pierre began thinking that perhaps the Franciscan order was not the one for which, with their newly acquired tastes and considering the politics of the time, they were best suited. They began to think, not of leaving the church, but of changing their ecclesiastical affiliations; and their gaze turned in the direction of the Order of St. Benedict. Amy found refuge with the Benedictines of Saint-Mesmin, near Orléans, where, as we see from Herminjard's collection of the correspondence of the Reformers, he at once busied himself as a translator from Greek into Latin. Trace of him is lost shortly afterwards, but an allusion on Rabelais' part to his friend's experiences will be found in the tenth chapter of the Third Book. According to the anecdote there related, Amy, when in doubt as to the outcome of the fracas and probably when the affair was at the hottest, had recourse to the Vergilian lots, *sortes Virgilianae* of the Middle Ages, the same means which Panurge employs to find out what the issue of his marriage and his predicted cuckoldry is to be. In his divinations, Pierre is said to have come upon the line:

Heu! fuge crudeles terras! fuge littus avarum!

"Alas; flee the cruel lands! flee the avaricious shore!" And Rabelais explains that his comrade did escape, safe and

sound, "from the ambuscade of the Goblins." For the term "Goblins" (*Farfadetz*) had come to be bandied about very freely, much in the sense of our current American "Ku Klux."

Another allusion on Rabelais' part to this affair may, it is possible, be seen in Chapter XLVI of the Fourth Book. There, the Little Devil of Popefiggery, in telling us of Lucifer's menus, after remarking that "all meals look alike to the Goblins," adds:

He used to make his lunch on schoolboys; but alas! through some unfortunate circumstance or other, for some years past, they've added the Holy Scriptures to their studies. For this reason, we are unable to spear any more of them for the Devil. And I believe that, if the Hypocrites did not come to our assistance by taking such books away from them, using threats, insults, violence, and even burning the lads' St. Paul in their hands,—I believe, if it were not for this, we should not be able to get any more pickings in that quarter.

As for Rabelais, as we shall see, he ended by laying aside the Franciscan habit and donning that of St. Benedict, with papal authorization for his conduct in the case.

Did François at this time experience a *crise de conscience*, a spiritual crisis. Was this a turning-point in his life? Did he here squarely face the issues and cast his irrevocable lot? Was it, with him, a choice between learning and religion, between Humanism and the Church, between Faith and the Spirit of the Renaissance? Such is the picture which some of his slightly over-dramatic biographers have endeavoured in the past to paint. But there is, scarcely, anything to

justify it. Had his choice been so sharply defined as all this, would he merely have laid off one monk's frock to don another, and would he have been so careful to secure the Church's highest approbation for what he did? Or was he——? But that comes later.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IMPERFECT SEX

When I speak of Woman, I speak of a sex so frail, so variable, so changeable, so inconstant and so imperfect that Nature impresses me,—and I say it with all honor and reverence,—as having lost, when she was building Woman, that good sense with which she has created and formed all other things. I have thought it all over, one-hundred-and-five times, and I am sure I do not know what conclusion to come to, unless it be that, in turning out Woman, Nature had more in mind the social delectation of man and the perpetuation of the species than she did the perfecting of individual womankind.

Dr. Rondibilis (Book Third, Chapter XXXII.)

I

IT is possible, thinks one of Rabelais' best modern biographers, M. Henri Clouzot, that the Fontenay-le-Comte affair involved consequences more strenuous than the confiscation of an Herodotus or a Plutarch, since it was serious enough to lead to Amy's taking flight. François may have been less compromised, and so was not under the necessity of acting so hastily. The latter probably remained at the residence of Geoffroy d'Estissac, bishop of the diocese, until the papal regularization of his conduct had been secured.

For he had already acquired important friends, and at least one powerful protector in D'Estissac.

In following up the relations between Budé and his two young friends of the monastery, we have got a little ahead of our story. Rabelais doubtless had formed other friendships within the convent walls; there is, for example, a certain Phinetus, a monk, whose name Budé associates with those of Rabelais and Amy, and M. Rathéry thinks this may have been the Finetius who was the friend of Dolet. François' studies, too—his reading, at any rate—were probably not exclusively Hellenistic. In addition to his Greek pursuits, he read, it is likely, the *Roman de la Rose* and other old romances of chivalry, the old farce, *Pathelin*, the poems of Villon, the works of Cretin and, in general, that literature which was popular at the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, a literature to which he was to owe much, and of which, in spirit, he was to be a continuator. But it was the personal contacts which he at this time was making outside the convent that were destined to be one of the most lasting influences in his career.

Fontenay-le-Comte, as has been said, was the centre of one of those numerous little groups of Humanists which were springing up all over France. The old feudal city itself, which had belonged in turn to the Counts of Poitou, to the royal preserves, to the English, and to the Dukes of Berry and of Brittany, had its architectural and other points for any youth of active fancy. Louis XI had made of Fontenay a commune, and it had, thereafter, expanded and prospered. Louis, further, had conferred upon it the jurisdiction of a royal bench, and the city then found itself inhabited by an assessor or lieutenant to the seneschal of

Poitou, by a lieutenant of the criminal branch, by king's counsel, advocates, clerks and bailiffs—it had, in short, become a thriving judicial capital of the provinces. Its name, tradition has it, had been given it by King Louis, at the time he took the city from the Lusignan family and gave it to his brother, Alphonse, Count of Poitou, whereupon it became the seat of Bas-Poitou. In Rabelais' time, under the shadows of its mediæval fortifications and its churches of Notre-Dame, Saint-Jean and Saint-Nicolas, there had grown up and was flourishing a new joint heresy: the love of Greek and a manifest contempt for womankind, the whole snuggling under the skirts of the law.

Rabelais, the son of a prominent and well-to-do lawyer, not unnaturally had connexions in the town. One of these connexions was with the family of Jean Brisson, King's Counsel. François must have been possessed of social graces, including that of conversation, for one of his early biographers, Colletet, tells us that the Brissons "urged him to throw his frock to the dogs, so that they might be able to enjoy, without interruption, his diverting talk." But more important still were the relations which he formed at this time with André Tiraqueau, relations which were to influence the future trend of his thinking, and which were to give a definite imprint to one of the most fascinating portions of his work.

Tiraqueau, an advocate by profession and the son-in-law of the lieutenant criminel et particulier, Artus Cailler, was what might be termed the ringleader of the Hellenist coterie at Fontenay. The members of this group were in the habit of meeting under the laurels of Tiraqueau's garden, there to discuss law and morals, history and philosophy, poetry and

literature. And since the Franciscan rule was not close-cloistered—the order was a mendicant one, and hence was usually located in the centres of population—François and his friend, Pierre, formed the habit of sitting in at these erudite gatherings. "Salon" would hardly have been the word, inasmuch as women were rigidly excluded; but if Woman was not present in person, she provided the most frequent and exhilarating topic of conversation.

Not in the sense of those *cénacles* which with us are inclined to form in the smoking compartments of Pullmans and similar retreats. The language, it is true, would seem to have been quite broad enough, if we are to judge from certain passages in the first edition of Tiraqueau's own magnum opus. But this was incidental. The real subject up for discussion was the Woman Question, the *Querelle des Femmes*, that disturbing controversy which had been going on since somewhere back in the fifteenth century, and which was to continue in a lively fashion for some decades to come. Was Woman an Angel in the House, a no longer quite stainless Lady of Chivalry exalted once more by the advent of the new Platonism; or was she——? Read Dr. Rondibills' fervent harangue.

Tiraqueau had made a name for himslf, and had won a recognized place as the leader of the anti-feminist faction, by publishing while yet a young man two works on the subject which attracted wide attention. One was a translation from the Latin of the *De Re Uxoria* of Francesco Barbaro, the Italian, a work which in its own country had run through three editions and been translated into the vernacular. The other was an original treatise on matrimonial laws, the *De Legibus Connubialibus*. This latter was based upon an article

dealing with the same theme in the Book of Common Law of Poitou; but the most important part of Tiraqueau's treatise had to do with those moral precepts governing the married state which he himself formulated.

The author, at the age of twenty-four, had married a bride who was not yet eleven; this was Marie, the daughter of Cailler. Such marriages it may be remarked in passing, were the thing at the time; Budé, at thirty-eight, had taken a wife who was barely fifteen. What Tiraqueau, in his *De Legibus*, is really doing is to outline for Marie's father the course of conduct which he, as a husband, proposes to pursue, and which he recommends to his wife. The book proved immensely popular, so popular that it had the honour of being plagiarized in the work of another legist, the *Topica Legalia* of Claude Chansonnette. First published in 1513, it was given a second edition two years later; and at the time that Rabelais and Amy came upon the scene, Tiraqueau was busy at work on a third edition which, tremendously augmented and "documented" with quotations from the range of classic and mediæval literature, appeared in 1524. Considering the bulk of his additions, the author must have pressed his friends into service, and the discussions in the Tiraqueau garden, under those academic laurels, must have revolved very often about the subject of the book.

Tiraqueau's position has been referred to as "anti-feminist," and so it came—already had come—to be considered. Perhaps, it would be nearer the truth to say that it was, simply, biblical and Pauline. The tenor of it was: Wives, be obedient unto your husbands (Tiraqueau's first "law" of marriage is: *Viri uxoribus imperanto; uxores viris obediunto.*) For this Pauline attitude was one which had

crept into the codes, as witness that section of the Coutumier of Poitou which our legist friend is commentating:

"As soon as man and woman, whether they be noble or commoners, are married in the country of Poitou, by the law of that country, the woman is in the husband's power, and is no longer in the power of her father, if she has one, and may not legally enter into a contract without the express consent of her husband, during the course of their marriage, nor shall she be able to administer those goods which they may have in common between them, or her own goods without the authority and consent of the aforementioned husband."

Our author then proceeds to develop his "laws," which may be summarized as follows:

Woman is man's inferior.

It is hers to obey; his to command.

Nature would have it so; plants and animals recognize this law.

Strength and reason are man's qualities.

Advice is then given as to the choice of a mate. Take one that is not too good-looking, nor yet too homely. The same station in life is the better rule, though this is not to be taken as absolutely excluding the male's marrying into the nobility. Avoid widows and old maids. Men should marry at thirty-six, girls at eighteen. Make inquiries concerning your prospective wife's family, her nationality and her character.

Among the gems which we find for feminine guidance are such as the following: Let not women adorn themselves, except for their husbands, present or to-be. (But if the husbands were all like Julia's—see Rabelais' anecdote in the

Dedicatory Epistle to Book Fourth—the wives, we may assume, would not have so hard a time of it.)

As for the education to be given a wife:

She is to be taught not to consider herself his equal.

She is not to be struck or mistreated in any way.

The wife is to be educated by example, and by "caresses mingled with severity."

The wife may be threatened when necessary.

Woman's domain is the garden and the distaff. She watches over her house while her husband is busied without.

He may consult her concerning his affairs outside the home, but he is to be careful not to reveal his personal and business secrets to her. What a woman doesn't tell when awake, she will not fail to tell in her sleep."

Tiraqueau prescribes marital fidelity on both sides, and indicates that the antidote for adultery is poison. And he ends on the following note of consolation:

" If in spite of all these precautions, your wife turns out to be immodest, remember to bear it patiently."

Such, in substance, was Tiraqueau's position. But Tiraqueau had a friend, who was also a friend of Amy's and of Rabelais', one Amaury Bouchard, who was lieutenant-general to the seneschal of Saintonge on the royal bench of Saint-Jean-d' Angely. Bouchard now, in 1522, entered the fray as a champion of the "imperfect sex," with a Latin work bearing a Greek title, the *Tes Gynaikeias Phytles Apologia*, or Defence of the Feminine Sex. This work was published by Tiraqueau's own printer, Josse Bade at Paris, and was headed by a Latin epistle of Amy's, addressed to

the author of the *De Legibus*. Amy appears to be a bit embarrassed, and to be doing his best to take the edge off what is, or may become, a ticklish situation between two of his friends. He explains that Bouchard's *Apologia* is a plea in behalf of that sex which Tiraqueau had somewhat discredited; and he hints—as to just how jocularly one cannot be quite sure—that a war is now on between the two jurists. There has been some disagreement among authorities as to just how serious this "quarrel" was in the beginning; but whether or not Bouchard intended his rejoinder as something in the nature of an attack (it bears the sub-title: *adversus Andream Tiraquellum Fontiniensem*), it is certain that Tiraqueau did not receive it with an unruffled disposition.

Amy ends his prefatory epistle with a tribute to "our dear Rabelais, the most erudite of our Franciscan brothers, . . . that same Rabelais, so diligent in fulfilling all the offices of friendship. . . . But I have more to say to you at our leisure, when we resume our sessions under that laurel thicket of ours, and our strolls down the lanes of that little garden which we love."

Rabelais, then, was with Tiraqueau at Fontenay, and Amy was with Bouchard while this quarrel, however literary, however personal, was brewing. From other sources, we know that Amy was something of a Platonist, and so may not have been wholly out of sympathy with the author of the *Apologia*, though, on the other hand, his position as Bouchard's guest hardly made it possible for him to decline the possibly unwelcome task of prefacer. But Rabelais, while he kept his friendship with Bouchard, later dedicating one of his works to him, would seem to have been clearly on the other side. In the 1524 edition of the *De Legibus*, there

are certain passages which can only be a reflection of Rabelais' personal views and, even, of his remarks. From one of these passages, we gather that some such conversation as the following may have taken place under those laurels, while the subject of the hour, Bouchard's book, was being hashed over.

TIRAQUEAU. So he's the attorney for the defence, eh? But how can the women retain him to defend them against a bill that's drawn up in Latin, which they can't read?

RABELAIS. Well, you know, he's always been a great ladies' man (*mulierarius*). He's always prided himself on cutting a figure with the fair sex. So, maybe he'll sit down at the table or go off in the corner with a bunch of them around him and translate it for them, after his fashion (*traduttore traditore*). Can't you just see him, sitting there with flowers in his hair? And can't you just smell his breath! That's the best way I know to ruin you in their opinion, even though you are not always so hard on them as one might think. You know what Lucian says, in his *Rhetoron Didaskalos*, that one of the best ways to succeed as an orator is to shine in the ladies' eyes.

And Tiraqueau, when he comes to write: "I cannot refrain from setting down here what our friend, François Rabelais, of the Franciscan brotherhood, a man learned in both tongues, had to say. . . ."

And when the next edition of the *De Legibus* appeared, it bore a Greek epigram in honour of the author; and the author of the epigram was François Rabelais:

At sight of this book in the Elysian Fields, men and women could be heard to murmur: "Take the case of those Laws by means of which the famous André has instructed

his Gauls in the duties of the conjugal state and the glories of marriage—if, I ask you, those same Laws had been taught by Plato, would there be any one among men more illustrious than Plato?"

The same edition contained, also, a Latin quatrain by Amy (who, apparently, was keeping on both sides of the fence), in which we find another tribute to François: "He whom you praise must be learned, indeed; he rises in our esteem for the reason that it is for you, Rabelais, who praise him."

Tiraqueau, for his part, generously lauds both young men, and the praise he gives to Rabelais casts a light upon the latter's intellectual occupations at this period. François, it seems, had undertaken a translation of Herodotus, probably his first literary work, undoubtedly from the Greek into the Latin, by way of completing that of the Italian Humanist, Laurentius Valla. It is this work which Tiraqueau commends, observing that Rabelais is gifted with a knowledge of the classic tongues that is unusual in one of his age and in a member of his order (*vir super aetatem praeterque ejus sodalicii morem*).

For Rabelais at this date was already fast achieving the reputation which was to be his of being an *encyclopædist* of learning. In this, he was to represent the Humanist ideal, based upon Quintilian's definition: "*Orbis ille doctrinae quam Graeci engkyklion paideian vocant!*" The two Greek words which Quintilian quotes, *engkyklion paideian*, due to a faulty reading of sixteenth-century texts, came to be transcribed by Budé as *encyclopædia*, of which word Rabelais is the first to employ the French form. He truly possessed

the "encyclopædic brain," as Sainéan calls it; he deserved the "*Totius enclyclopædiæ profundissimam abyssum*" of Louis Rouzeau; he was that "abysm of science" which the aged Gargantua desired to behold in his son, Pantagruel. Pliny was, if not his model, at least one of Rabelais' constant sources; and Rabelais himself has been called "a living encyclopædia" and "the Pliny of his day." Here, criticism tends rather to uphold than to detract. There has been, by way of example, some discussion as to the extent of Rabelais' linguistic accomplishments, and it has been asserted that he "knew languages but superficially"; but we may rather agree with Prof. Lefranc, that he "was equipped with a profound knowledge of the two classic tongues, and had become familiar with the greater part of the authors of antiquity." Of modern languages, he probably was familiar only with French and Italian (which was a common possession of the Humanists); Spanish he likely did not know, while German and English were not considered literary languages. As to Hebrew and Arabic, he seems to have aspired to know these tongues, but it is doubtful if his aspirations were achieved. So that, when Tiraqueau praises François for his learning, he is praising him for that erudition which alone the Humanists valued—a knowledge of and a thorough acquaintance with classical antiquity. In this, Rabelais seems by this time to have made considerable progress; and to his literary and linguistic knowledge, he was later to add a thorough mastery of the medicine and natural science of the ancients. Whether he had at this time attained that acquaintance which he was later to manifest with architecture, music (see the New Prologue to Book Fourth), costume, the

art of warfare, navigation, the plastic and mechanic arts in general, etc., we have no means of knowing. A large part of these acquirements no doubt came later, with a deepening experience of life; but of one thing we are sure, and that is that, even at this early date, he was jolly good company, a man for any and all times—"*omnium horarum hominem*," as old Antoine Leroy of blessed memory puts it.

To speak of the formative character of early contacts is to lapse into pedagogic platitude; but Rabelais' mind, it is safe to say, would not have been quite the same mind, had it not been for the group he met in André Tiraqueau's garden, and the coterie which he was to discover a short while later, at the Priory of Ligugé. There has been some dispute as to the precise amount of influence which Tiraqueau exercised over Rabelais' Third Book, and this is a question, possibly, which should be discussed in connection with that book; but it is evident that the influence of the jurist was, whatever one may say, a ponderable one on the cast of Maître François' mind as a whole.

Of Rabelais and Tiraqueau, aside from the question of Panurge's marriage, we shall hear again, from time to time. We shall find Rabelais dedicating one of his own early literary efforts to his legal friend; and later still, when skies begin to darken for the creator of Pantagruel, we shall find his one-time friend lapsing into that silence (to put the best interpretation upon the matter) which is friendship's worst treachery.

Finally, Rabelais was to owe a debt, not merely to Tiraqueau, but to the Humanist jurisconsults of his time, as a body. He was, in a manner, to become the literary and

popular champion of their ideas and their cherished ideals, thus according their lucubrations a vogue which was hardly to be attained through the medium of learned publications.

II

Before taking leave of Rabelais' Fontenay-le-Comte period, we ought possibly to glance at some of the burlesque legends which have grown up out of and around these youthful years; for this period has been a fertile one for the anecdotalists. These latter have not hesitated to attribute to a man who was nearly thirty, and who, moreover, according to his own official statement (contained in a Prayer to the Pope some ten years later), "frequently officiated in the holy ministry of the altar," certain sacrilegious waggeries of which no man in his senses, even a sportively inclined atheist, would ever have been guilty.

There is, among others, the tale of what happened when the lieutenant-general of Fontenay, accompanied by the leading citizens of the town, called at the abbey and had the gates opened by force: how Rabelais was found in one of the oubliettes of the institution, "where he would have been dead in a very short while."

Then, there is François des Rues, author of a *Description de la France*, published in 1605:

"He ended up by casting his frock to the dogs, in order to be more free to lead a lascivious life; he lived like an Epicurean, and no day passed that he was not drunk."

To this, let us hear the answer of Père Niceron:

"Certain ones have endeavoured to convey the impression that it was out of a spirit of debauchery that he left the Order of St. Francis, but that is a fanciful concoction, with-

out any foundation whatsoever, on the part of persons who have conceived of Rabelais certain ideas which are diametrically opposed to the truth, and who are accustomed to look upon him as a man whose whole life was passed in laughing, jesting and having a good time."

Most of these anecdotes are too stupid and too silly to bear refutation, or even repetition. The simple truth is, Rabelais had other and a good deal more serious business in hand; and as Mr. Arnold Bennett, with refreshing novelty, has observed, there are after all only twenty-four hours in the day. And as M. Rathéry remarks, even if François had desired to "cast his frock to the dogs," he would not have felt the necessity of dragging it through the mud. What seems more likely is that Friar François had won the dislike of his brother monks through his addiction to his books; he was another Friar Claude of the Hauts-Barrois, who did "nothing but study any more." This, at least, is the light that we get from a passage in Leroy, who is relying upon the Letters of Budé. Leroy tells us that the monks of Fontenay's real grievance was "that instead of devoting to the convent table the profits which he annually gained through evangelic preaching, he employed these for the upkeep of a large library, where he passed the greater part of his time in leafing through his books." All of which does not sound like the tale of a highly profligate young man.

What Rabelais gained from his years at Fontenay and in Poitou has been summed up with admirable concision by M. Benjamin Fillon:

"Rabelais left Fontenay in 1524, after having remained there some fifteen years." (That "fifteen years" is, it may

be parenthesized, doubtful.) "His language there took on, in the course of his long stay, that smack of the soil which those who are strangers to the country never would be able to appreciate, but which is the first thing to strike those who, like ourselves, were born there. The names of persons, places and things, patois words, allusions to popular customs, indigenous sayings and proverbs are to be found on almost every page of his books, and commentators frequently have gone astray in seeking a distant derivation for what has, simply, come out of the drygoods-merchant's shop in the rue des Loges, or out of the reed hut of the Maillezais shanty-dweller."

François, in his Poitou days, must have been what we know as "a good mixer"; else his language and his work as a whole never would have acquired that "smack of the soil" of which M. Fillon speaks. He must have mingled with all classes and conditions of men, and in all walks of life, from the mincing courtier to the sneak-thief who, like Panurge at the pardon-boxes, believed in receiving "an hundred-fold." But mere mingling is not enough, as many a would-be writer who tries to repeat the trick discovers to his own disheartening. Rabelais must have done his with a seeing and a recording eye, and, above all, with a keen and listening ear. He talked with the farmer at the furrow, the merchant in the shop, the brickmason over his "bird," the fisherman over his nets, the sailor at the yardarms. And he remembered even the cuss-words peculiar to each tribe. This it was which was to give him his place in literature, as the first great and truly popular writer of modern times. And he owed it to Poitou, rather than to his native Touraine, the memories of a man of thirty predominating over those of a child who

had stood in front of Innocent the Pastry-Maker's at Chinon.

This, incidentally, was where Balzac made his mistake. He wrote the language of old Touraine, his Touraine, in the *Contes Drolatiques*, and doubtless fancied that he was recapturing the flavor of the Maître; but the latter wrote, if anything, not the language of Touraine, but that of Poitiers and Maillezais. And this brings us to another scene in François' life, not a teapot-tempesty one like that at Fontenay, but a happy and idyllic scene, likewise laid in fertile and smiling Poitou.

CHAPTER SIX

BENEFIT OF "CLERGIE"

A ce moien il ayme gens lettrez
En Grec, Latin, et François bien estrez
A diviser d'histoire ou theologie
Dont tu es l'un, car en toute clergie
Tu es expert, à ce moien te print
Pour le servir, dont tresgrant heur te vint,
Tu ne pouois trouver meilleur service
Pour te pourveoir bien tost de benefice.

Epistre de Bouchet

PIERRE AMY, as we have seen, had "escaped from the Goblins" by taking refuge with the Benedictines of Orléans, and Rabelais' circle of friends as well as himself doubtless had begun to feel that a mendicant order like the Franciscan was not the one best suited to an ambitious young Humanist. It is quite apparent, meanwhile, that François had won and cultivated the friendship of his diocesan superior, Geoffroy d' Estissac, Bishop of Maillezais, Abbot of Saint-Pierre-de-Maillezais and Prior of Ligugé. D'Estissac was a gentleman ecclesiastic of the time, with Humanist leanings, and one who had a distinct relish for the company

of the learned. How it was he first became interested in the young monk of his diocese with so remarkable a knowledge of Greek, we cannot say. One conjecture is probably as good as another. It may have been through some such coterie as that which foregathered in Tiraqueau's garden, or it may have been through the exercise of his episcopal functions; for D'Estissac, in contradistinction to other bishops of his day, was in the habit of staying at home and devoting some attention to his charge. However he and Rabelais may first have become acquainted, the latter now became the bishop's secretary, as is clear from the verses of Jean Bouchet to Maître François which have been quoted at the beginning of this chapter. And it was D'Estissac who obtained the papal indult regularizing his young protégé's somewhat anomalous position; there is no documentary evidence in support of this, but we know it must have been so, since any such action would have had to go through the appellant's superior. That such an indult was granted (1524–25), authorizing Rabelais to leave the Minorites, to join the Benedictines, and to enter D'Estissac's own Abbey of Maillezais, is evident from the *Supplicatio* which, some ten years later (in 1535), Rabelais addressed to Pope Paul III. in connection with another matter. In the present case, it was Clement VII. who intervened.

At this point, an important conjecture of M. Clouzot's is to be mentioned, to the effect that Rabelais, hard pressed at Fontenay, not caring to be put *in pace*, and impatient for news, may have travelled as far as Lyons to await the messenger from Italy who came bringing the papal boon. This conjecture is based upon a passage in Rabelais' *Sciomachia*, alluding to his having been in Lyons on the day

of the battle of Pavia. It may have been at this time, thinks M. Clouzot, that Maître François scraped his first acquaintance with the Lyons printers, who five years later were to welcome him with open arms.

However this may be, the indult was granted, and Rabelais was free to pursue his studies. It is likely that he did not stay at the abbey, but that he resided with the bishop at the Priory of Ligugé, a little less than six miles south of Poitiers. In any case, the Abbey of Maillezais would have been something of a palace compared to that of Fontenay, and the Benedictines themselves, always noted as patrons of learning and the arts, hardly would have interfered with the newcomer's inclinations. Here, then, François remained while waiting for a living (1525–27?); for that a living was the thing he had in mind is evident from Bouchet's *Pour te pourveoir bien tost de benefice;* and it was here that he was to enjoy the close and intimate friendship of the Abbé Ardillon and other lettered prelates of an age of letters. Bouchet, it is true, is not very specific as to the nature of his friend's employment; the latter may have been D'Estissac's secretary, or he may have been instructor to the bishop's nephew, Louis d'Estissac, son of the late Bertrand d'Estissac, who had been Charles VIII.'s squire at Naples. But whatever the precise nature of his position, that position could not have been an arduous one, since it left the holder sufficient leisure to compose verse epistles in bed.

As far back as 1317, Maillezais, of the abbey of which only a few crumbling walls longer remain, had been detached from the bishopric of Poitiers and had been created a separate diocese, one including the deanery of Fontenay.

The Abbot of Saint-Pierre was Bishop of Maillezais, and his monks were canons in the cathedral. In 1516, by the Concordat which he concluded with Leo X., Francis I. won the right to name his own bishops, and it was as a result of this ruling that D'Estissac had come to obtain his preferment. He was of a distinguished and military family, one close to the sovereign; and birth counted in the church in those days. This was how it was, in 1503, at the age of twenty-six, he had come to be appointed to the Priory of Ligugé. Other benefices followed, and he was made Bishop of Maillezais in 1518.

Geoffroy d'Estissac, like most Renaissance Humanists, had a distinct flair for architecture. He was always building and rebuilding, and he possessed one or two magnificent residences, among which may be mentioned that at L'Hermenault in Vendée, nine miles north of Fontenay-le-Comte, and the one which the prelate built on his paternal estate, Coulonges-les-Royaux (the present Coulonges-sur-l'Autize), half-way between Fontenay and Niort. Parts of this latter dwelling may still be seen at the Château de Terre-Neuve, near Fontenay, whither they were transported some forty years ago. Possessing a number of attractive places of abode, d'Estissac was something of a local traveller, and it was, not unlikely, in his company that Rabelais came to scour Poitou and to know the topography and other features of the province so thoroughly.

He did know it thoroughly—knew it *dans les coins*, as the French say, in all its nooks and corners. He knew the name of every little out-of-the-way market town; more than half a hundred proper names of Poitou have been counted in his pages. He knew its flora and its fauna and its human fauna,

He knew its birds and beasts, its fishes and its reptiles. He knew its woods and trees, its wines and vines and nuts. He knew Mirebalais, its windmills and nut-grease candles. He knew Châtellerault and its weavers. He knew the great harbour-chain and the lantern of La Rochelle. He knew the obscure and technical botany of particular parts of the province. He knew the saints' traditions and the unsaintly oaths and tales of the countryside. He frequented the fairs of Niort and elsewhere and there, perhaps, picked up such legends as that of Dindenault and his sheep ("Panurge's sheep"). He most certainly witnessed and may even have taken part in the old surviving mediæval mystery plays of Saint-Maixent and other places; there is a pleasing rumour that, upon one occasion, he played the part of God, the Father.—And speaking of the Mysteries, see the far from circumspect episode which, scarcely transferable to a sober biographical narrative, is related in Chapter XXVII. of the Third Book. See, likewise, Villon and his dramatic experiences as narrated by Rabelais' Lord of Basché, in Book Fourth, Chapter XIII., with the allusions to the "Devil Plays" of Saumur, Doué, Montmorrillon, Angers, etc. The fable of Melusine, that half-serpent, half-woman of the House of Lusignan, a fable that sinks its roots far back into pre-Christian and Celtic times—this, and such a legend as that of "Big-Toothed-Geoffroy"—such are the debts which François Rabelais owes to the rich and marshy, frequently inundated soil of ancient Poitou, and to its peers and peasants, the squire and the farmhand, the crossroads merchant and the village carpenter, the grandam and the grandsire—"not forgetting, always, the women and little children." That terrain was for him an education, and while

endowed by nature with an observing and a retentive mind, he probably owed no small debt, so far as opportunity for observation was concerned, to the freedom accorded him by, and the life he lived with, Geoffroy, Bishop of Maillezais.

II

The churchly domains of Maillezais were the seat of another literary and Humanistic *cénacle* (the word is a favoured and expressive one) of the times; but whereas the Tiraqueau coterie was legalistic in complexion, the one at Maillezais was ecclesiastic. Geoffroy d'Estissac had followed the example of the Italian cardinals by building superb gardens, planted with rare flowers, and it was to such retreats that he invited those whom he favoured for their learning. The verses of Bouchet above quoted set forth the bishop's predilections: "He likes those who are versed in Greek, Latin and French literature, and who are well equipped to converse on history or theology; of whom you are just the one, for you are skilled in all learning (*en toute clergie tu es expert*); and it is for this reason that he has chosen you to serve him, which is great good luck for you, seeing you could not find an employment better fitted to provide you speedily with a living." These verses, too, show us why it was the bishop had taken to François: it was on account of the latter's impressive and encyclopædic (*toute clergie*) erudition.

The Bishop of Maillezais' residence was a sort of rustic Thélème; and it is not at all unlikely that it was one of Rabelais' models in sketching in the picture of that pleasantly wayward institution which Gargantua desires to

found for Friar John Hackem. And it is significant that it was here that Rabelais' first literary work which has come down to us was done; while still further significance may be seen in the fact that this work, a verse epistle to a friend who also had the freedom of the house, should have been composed, not in one of the two learned tongues, Greek and Latin, but in the vernacular—that homely everyday French which even a Humanist had to speak at times. Reference is to the: *Epistle of Mr. François Rabelais, Man of Great Greek and Latin Learning, to Bouchet, Dealing with the Imaginings One May Have While Waiting for the Thing Desired.* The title, as well as the work itself, are preserved to us in the *Épîtres Morales et Familières* of Bouchet. Inasmuch as Rabelais' translation of Herodotus has been lost, this work really marks his debut, so far as we, his present-day readers, are concerned. And Maître François' Epistle, together with Bouchet's Epistle in reply, serves to give us a rather vivid conception of that lettered paradise which both men frequented.

This Bouchet, with his self-adopted title of "Hero of Perilous Crossings" (*Traverseur des Voies Perilleuses*), was by way of being a bit of a character. A solicitor at the bar of Poitiers by profession and a fairly affluent retainer of the powerful Trémoille family, he was, by avocation, a pompous and romantic poet of the old, inflated school. As a rhetorician and a versifier, he was a very good soul-saver, which was something he strove to be in his verse. As poets, it is to be feared, he and Rabelais were about evenly matched; though the shading is, if anything, in favor of the latter, who seldom endeavoured to rise above doggerel. Bouchet is best known as the author of the *Annales*

d'Aquitaine and of a collection of prayers bearing the title: *Canticles and Contemplative Prayers of the Penitent Soul, Crossing the Perilous Paths of This World*, not to speak of any number of volumes of verse. Hampered in his poetical career by a family of eight children, four boys and four girls, he was compelled, it seems, to work overtime, his poetry being reserved for off hours; and we are, accordingly, not surprised when we find more than one of his verse epistles dated "Saturday evening"; poetry with him was like a bath with the American rustic. What is more, he carried over his business habits into his poeticizing hours, and kept time on his Muse—made her punch the clock, one might say—as on his legal practice. In the end, he figured up that he had devoted to his Parnassian pursuits "ten times nineteen-hundred-fifty hours," adding the sage and highly moral reflection that this was better far than to have squandered the same amount of time drinking and playing cards in a tavern. Such a man, it may be seen, was made for poetry. Nevertheless, he had his audience. Such a one might be compared to the newspaper column "poet" of today, who similarly has his readers. Moreover, he seems to have had certain personal qualities and social charms which made him an agreeable companion, and which had endeared him to Geoffroy d'Estissac. To hear Rabelais tell it, all was impatience at Ligugé during Bouchet's absence:

That hope you gave us when you went away
Has often caused our anxious thoughts to stray;
Fancies have been like saddest columbine,
As after you our tristful souls would pine:
They've waited long, desire uncomforted,

Until, at last, they're driven from their bed
Of calm repose, and in the realm of dreams
Wander about, the while to us it seems,
The hours are days, and days are filled with years,
And ten days are an age of hopes and fears.

* * * *

Since those seven days are gone, and you not here,
And, with them, joy and peace and all good cheer,
Why, then, we must, the appointed time once past,
Hoard up the hours and minutes, far from fast,
And count them one by one, the long day through,
Watching the clock the while we watch for you.

* * * *

'Twas this I thought your lordship ought to know:
The state we're in, and how we come and go
As in a dream, awaiting your reprieve;
And just as soon as you can, kindly, leave
Those studies which, I know, are your mind's food,
Forsaking that charmed, peaceful solitude
For a wordy world's too wordy brawls and chaff,
Set out at once, my friend, and please, don't laugh!

* * * *

There is no need to tell you of your host,
Nor of the friendly welcome you will find,
For I am sure that you are still in mind
Of the one you found the last time that you came. . . .

Believe me, when you come, there'll be a truce
On the part of all the lords here round about;
Estates and honours they'll forget and flout,
To welcome you and keep you in good cheer;
For there is not a day I do not hear
The subject coming up: they speak of you,
And say that in all France, much less Poitou,
There's not a lad, of all the ones they know,
For whom their hearts more warmly burn and glow.
To them, your writings are like honeyed flowers,
To drive away the dead and lagging hours;
When the business of the day at last is done,
They seek with you their sport, a merry one;
Their manners at the same time profit, too,
For which they give you all the credit due.
For when I read your works, it seems to me,
The two are mingled there, inseparably:
Good doctrine and good discipline combine
With gentleness to lend that flavor fine.

And Rabelais' epistle concludes with the invitation:

Or if, to exercise your lofty style,
You'd care to write a letter, please do so;
The pleasure that you'll give you'll never know.
But first of all, there comes my first request:
I want you here, my friend, and as our guest;
They all invite you, speaking through my pen,
Urge me to urge you that you come again.
From Ligugé, this sixth day of September—
I'm writing from my bed, but please remember

That I am yours, on this and every day,
Your friend and humble servant, Rabelais.

The last lines give us a picture of the not too strenuous life which François was leading at this time, in the Maillezais household.

If Rabelais' Epistle has been quoted somewhat *in extenso*, this has been with the object of giving the modern English reader some idea of the character of this, his first preserved work, and of the author's abiltities as a versifier. For as a versifier, he is here to be seen at his best. Most of his verse, scattered throughout his prose work, is but doggerel, the only other piece that could compare with the present one being the Abbey of Thélème Inscription. At least one of Rabelais' modern editors, M. Burgaud des Marets, probably would disagree with an opinion of Rabelais as a "poet" which has been expressed above, basing his disagreement upon the piece just quoted.

"If," remarks M. des Marets, "Rabelais had written many pieces like this one, we should be strongly inclined to assign him a respectable place among the poets of his age. Nothing in this epistle recalls the constraint, the stiffness and the pretentiousness, which commonly betray him when he tries his hand at rhyming. It is evident that his imagination here does not encounter the ordinary obstacles. His heart speaks and expands.

"If we dwell upon this in passing, it is not to indulge in a little rhetoric for the benefit of our readers, nor with the object of adding a sprig of withered laurel to our author's crown. It merely seems to us that, upon this occasion, friend-

ship has been sufficiently potent to render Rabelais more of a poet than he ordinarily was.

"The piece is sufficiently creditable, both to himself and to J. Bouchett."

Which is not, after all, exactly fulsome praise!

Rabelais as a poet has given his modern sensitive commentators, such as M. Plattard, some difficult explanatory moments. It is certain that he was accorded a verbal poetic recognition by Clément Marot, by Joachim du Bellay (who speaks of the "*utile-doux*" Rabelais), by Étienne Pasquier (in *Recherches de la France*), and others. This has rather puzzled the Rabelaisians of a later date. In another note, M. des Marets observes that "Rabelais impresses us as going in over his head every time he writes in verse;" and Stapfer, in his book on Rabelais the man, while he devotes a chapter to the "Poetry of Expression," qualifies it by saying: "A great poet, in the sense of being a creator, Rabelais is a mediocre versifier. As a rhymster, he has three different styles, two of which are bad ones." There are, indeed, only two explanations which may be offered for Rabelais' vogue as a poet in his own day. One is that the poets of that age were greatly addicted to mere metrics, and almost all of Rabelais' efforts are imitative metrical tours de force. The other, which is not a likely one, is that the word poet was understood in its etymological sense, that of *maker* or creator. Possibly, all in all, the best thing to do is to conclude, as some have done, that if Marot, for example, lists Rabelais as a poet, it is for the reason that he is in dire need of a rhyme for Saint-Gelais; Marot has been known to indulge in such tricks before.

Another question: did Rabelais know, or did he not know, that Bouchet was a bad poet? And if he was aware of the fact, was he simply praising him for friendship's sake? The thing has been known to happen, and does still happen, everywhere and at all times. What critic of today will damn the novel of the man whose Scotch he habitually samples? There may be such a one, but his name is not in the telephone book. And Bouchet, from all indications, including Rabelais' Epistle, was a likable sort.

Within a few days, there came an answer to Rabelais' metrical invitation, in the form of an *Épître Responsive*, containing one-hundred-eight verses, which it must, by accurate computation, have taken Bouchet less than two days to turn out. In the 1545 collection of Bouchet's Epistles, this effort is sub-titled "Description of a handsome dwelling and praises of Messieurs d'Estissac." As a matter of fact, Bouchet's "description" tells us precious little about the old Priory of Ligugé, which had been founded by St. Martin, and which, during the Hundred-Years' War, the English had converted into a fortress. Or if we are to judge from that description, the neighbourhood was one peopled exclusively with nymphs and naiads, dryads and hamadryads. In his reply, Bouchet apologizes for not having kept his promise, and excuses himself on the score of professional duties—with his wife and children always in the background. He would, of course, vastly prefer to be in the land of "*bons fruictz et bons vins*," near that

> *Prelate devout, of conscience superfine,*
> *And very learned in all lore divine,*
> *In canon law and the humanities. . . .*

There is also a little compliment in passing for that "*chevalier tres hardy*," the head of the house's nephew, and an unflattering allusion to "the bigwigs and the bourgeois of the town," as contrasted with the excellent good company to be found at Ligugé.

Such, then, was the life of rustic and scholarly diversion which Rabelais led at Ligugé. The Priory itself would seem to have been a rather unpretentious building, unlike some of the bishop's other residences, preserving, it is likely, more or less of its ancient military character. There is a round tower of the north wall still standing, which to this day bears the name of *tour de Rabelais;* and it may have been in a room of this tower that François lay on that September morning, lazily composing his *Epistle to Bouchet*. For Ligugé was, to quote M. Rathery, "a pleasant and agreeable place, a sort of Abbey of Thélème, if you like to call it such, but a respectable one and one worthy of a bishop, where the library was more in honour than the kitchen; though, without any justification, an attempt has been made to portray it as a rendezvous of libertines and gross materialists." This, apparently, was one occasion when monks liked to be somewhere else than at the spits. As for Rabelais' place in this setting:

"By sheer force of mind," says Colletet, "and by long and arduous labour, he had acquired that polymathy which few men have possessed; for it is certain that he was a very learned Humanist and a very profound philosopher, theologian, mathematician, physician, jurisconsult, musician, arithmetician, geometer, astronomer, and even a painter and a poet, and all of these at one and the same time. But inasmuch as natural science was more to his taste, he resolved

to apply himself to it exclusively, and with this object in view, he went straight off to Montpellier."

III

Some three miles distant from Ligugé was the historic Augustinian monastery of Fontaine-le-Comte (not to be confused with Fontenay-le-Comte), which likewise had suffered numerous vicissitudes at the hands of the English and others (the foundation was one dating back to the early-twelfth-century), and the abbot of which was one Antoine Ardillon, a distinguished Humanist. This prelate, while he did not go out in society himself, kept open house for the learned gentry of the neighbourhood, which meant, chiefly, monks of various orders and theologians of varying rank; for the laity, while nominally welcome, probably did not put in an impressive attendance, and Rabelais, in frequenting this "*cénacle*," is still keeping company with the cloth.

The talkative Bouchet, fortunately, has provided us with something in the way of a register of those present. We know from him that the guests included: Jacques Prevost, a Doctor of Theology and a regent of the University of Poitiers; one Quentin, who was noted as a clerical traveller; the Franciscan monk, Trojan, who was to become a Protestant leader, and who, later, by his Calvinistic preachings, was to provoke an uprising of Poitiers students; Jacques de Puytesson, collegiate canon of Saint-Jean-Baptiste at Ménigoute; etc. The only prominent layman, perhaps, was the legist Nicolas Petit. Jean d'Auton, Abbot of Angle-sur-Anglin, seems to have looked in occasionally; and groups of students, "lovers of the Muses," sometimes paid a visit,

Rabelais' intellectual circle, it is evident, aside from his personal daily and invigorating contacts with life in the raw, is still a restricted one, of a complexion prevailingly ecclesiastic; and this, too, was to have its future influence. True, these men were Humanists, and their contacts had been widened by travel, by reading or by correspondence—we even find Ardillon quoting Dante, a rare thing, indeed, in that age. But they remained, after all, for the most part, if not clerics at the bone, certainly clergy born and bred. That Rabelais enjoyed this society is indicated by two affectionate references (in Chapter V., Book Second, and in Book Third, Chapter XLIII.) to "the noble Ardillon." And he was not the only man of letters who paid his debt in such coin. Macrin, some years later, was to dedicate an ode to Ardillon, and Bouchet had inscribed his *Annales d'Aquitaine* to the same prelate.

In the discussions of this group, the question of the new "Reform" in the Church must have come up, from time to time. There was, undoubtedly, a certain Protestant note to be heard now and then; Trojan's views were forming, and Bouchet, if we are to judge from his Epistle to the Preachers of his day, had certain leanings in the same direction, while still insisting upon the respect due to holy orders. Such verses as the following would seem to be of the very core of modern Protestantism:

When we speak of Holy Writ,
'Tis the Bible, for in it
There is no guile; believe we must,
For the doctors we may not trust,
Since they themselves do disagree. . . .

Man's opinion does not last,
Unless God come to make it fast;
But what is in the Bible, know'st,
Is inspired of the Holy Ghost.

Such was Bouchet's opinion in his writings, and such were the views he and others must have expressed in conversation. In the lines just quoted, what we have is the Protestant dogma of the literal inspiration and verbal infallibility of the Scriptures, as the sole source of religious certitude. Whether or not he concurred, François surely listened to such doctrine, with those ever-listening ears of his. He must have listened, also, to attacks on the monks and on the institution of "monkdom," as well as to patriotic and royalist disparagements of the ultra-montane See of Rome. For Ardillon and others, king's men in their sympathies and in their personal attachments, were what might be termed nationalistic Catholics. Their position, while not precisely the same, had much in common with that of the members of the Action Française of today. And we are to remember something of this when, a little later, in his Fourth Book, we find Rabelais violently attacking the papacy; this does not mean that he is attacking the Church —it is in the spurious and stupid Fifth Book that the real attack on Catholicism occurs. Catholics such as Ardillon believed that the Church was quite capable of righting its own wrongs, including the evils of the monastic state. Their position was, essentially, a middle one; and they were to find satisfaction later in the rulings of the Council of Trent.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PIEPOWDERED

Upon returning, we found the door locked; and we were told that, while one could enter there with no trouble at all, as one could Avernus, it was another and a difficult matter getting out again, and that we should not be able to get out in any manner whatsoever without a passport and visa from the management. The only reason given was that one did not go through fairs as one did through a market, and that we had dusty feet.

THE FIFTH BOOK, CHAPTER XI.

I

MICHELET has described the life of François Rabelais as a "restless, wandering, fugitive one, like that of the poor hare trapped between two furrows." There is, possibly, more poetry than exactitude in such a description. Rabelais' life was a restless and a roaming one; he lived in an age of intellectual unrest, and his own temper was marked by that mental lack of quiescence which is implied in the Frenchman's expressive "*curiosité*," or in his own superb phrase, "*amateur de peregrinité*."—"I have long known you," says Panurge to Pantagruel, "as a lover of strange scenes, and as one who was always eager to see and learn something new." Africa, as with the ancients, always had something

new to offer, and Rabelais' turning of the old adage was later to haunt Flaubert. But to say that Maître François' existence was a "fugitive" one, "like that of the hare between two furrows," is not precisely in accordance with the facts. The romanticism of the simile doubtless thrilled the nineteenth-century historian, who cried to heaven for some one to "do" a biography of the Maître; but as a matter of fact we are to remember, in the first place, that Rabelais came of a prosperous upper-middle-class family, and that, as a result, certain avenues were open to him from the start. His temperamental vitality was to get him into scrapes from time to time, but we have already found him early developing a certain genius in acquiring men of rank and influence as his protectors. This ability will be emphasized as we follow him further in his career; we shall seldom if ever find him without someone to fall back upon. Only toward the end of his life did the skies of friendship and of patronage blacken over for an anxious interval; but it proved to be no more than an interval, and Maître François emerged to die in the security of the commonplace. During the years between, he had been in trouble upon occasion, sometimes with the Theological Faculty of the Sorbonne, over his books, which was in good part a political row, with the King himself on the author's side; and sometimes with other authorities, over affairs not his own, in which he had seen fit to mix. But Michelet's phrase, in so far as it conveys the impression, as it does to a degree, that Rabelais' life was a *hunted* one, is not exact. Rabelais was hunted, but it was rather by his own inborn vitality, his intellectual vigour and that hunger and thirst after life which was a common heritage of the men of his era.

What might seem to confirm the impression conveyed by Michelet is François' habit, so annoying to a documentary biographer, so convenient for one of the Maurois school, of dropping completely out of sight for periods of years at a stretch. There are a number of such biographic gaps which have never been, and may never be, filled in, satisfactorily or otherwise. We come upon one of those periods now, in the years which follow the delightful and literate sojourn at the Priory of Ligugé. The last date we have from the Poitou period is September 8 (1526), that of Bouchet's reply to Rabelais' verse Epistle. The next we definitely hear of François is in September, 1530, when he puts in an appearance as a matriculating medical student at the University of Montpellier. How fill up the interval? The answer, according to the best authorities, would seem to be that Rabelais, after having scoured Poitou from one end to another, crissways and crosswise, and after having become familiar with everything from the fish in its rivers to its Christmas chanties, must have set out on one of his wandering expeditions, the first of any importance, in the course of which he very likely made some such tour of the universities of France as is described in the fifth chapter of the first book of his *Pantagruel.* This tour, it would further seem, must have ended up, as the American collegian's grand tour does nowadays, with Paris and the historic Left Bank; for the MM. Clouzot, Lefranc and other authorities say it is absolutely necessary that Rabelais should have "paid his respects to the Parisians" before 1532—necessary, for the reason that he would have been unable, otherwise, to write what we know as his Second Book. The tentative dates which M. Clouzot would assign for the Paris stay are the

years 1528–1530, which leaves a period of a year or two, between his leaving Ligugé and his coming to Paris, for his student wanderings.

Meanwhile, if we know nothing very definite about François, we do have some news from the family back home. His father, Antoine Rabelais, being the oldest practising advocate at Chinon, has just been authorized (May 24, 1527) to take over the bench of Chinon, in the absence of his superiors and up to the 5th of July, 1527. So much we learn from the National Archives, the decree of Parliament being a matter of record. This, so far as we know, was the highest place in life which Antoine Rabelais was to attain; and he, as a provincial gentleman of the bar, probably looked upon it as quite high enough. Did he sometimes, in those days of the slow post, think of his younger son of the "dusty feet," who appeared to be bent upon violating the old Gallic proverb, by proving that one did run through fairs as one would through a market? The chances are that if he did, it was none too hopefully; for that is a way that fathers have.

Rabelais' wanderings, on a small scale, had begun in Poitou, where it may have been Geoffroy d'Estissac's habit of roaming his diocese which had inspired him. He must have learned to love that marshy paysage, where, in the old days, the low lands were each winter submerged by the backflow from the Ocean and by the waters of the Sèvre, the Vendée and the Autize—the monks had had to busy themselves, not only in founding and building monasteries, but in digging ditches, constructing canals, and in putting in gutters and mill-races. Of one thing we may be sure, he found it more to his taste than did Huysmans, some hundreds of years

later. It was at Ligugé, it may be recalled, that Joris-Karl, in 1901, was received as a Benedictine lay-brother. Three years before, however, he had paid the spot a visit and had found it charming; in speaking of the "meandering" and "dawdling" Clain: "It fiddle-faddles along, likes to spread out and come together again, runs through a wide valley with bright and flowering hillsides for horizons, then between tall poplar hedgerows, the leaves making a noise like that of the sea when it bursts in foam under lash of the wind." But at the end of 1901, upon parting company with the Benedictines, the author of *Là-Bas* proceeds to wash his hands of Poitou—"dirty Poitou," as he calls it; the landscape now was "so distressed with stunted trees, with ridiculously low hills, with muddy creeks, with birds that did not sing, and with peasants that sang too much" that Joris-Karl made up his mind not to step outside his own garden, and never to take any other road except that which led to the monastery gate. From which it may be seen that there is, after all, such a thing as an Inner Landscape. Rabelais was not a Joris-Karl.

Larger worlds than Poitou were beckoning now and François was ready, waiting for them, and wise enough to know that to wait sometimes means to go. His education had been carried forward very satisfyingly, to a point. Was he not a man "learned in both tongues," as the Humanists had it in their snobbish phrase? Were not his company and his conversation sought after by connoisseurs of each? But all this was hardly providing a life-plan. Even an expert talker does not, ordinarily, talk his way through life; and Rabelais, erudite as he was in his tastes, was of too active a disposition to spend his years in poring over texts and codices. He took

in that he might be able to give out; and that meant that he must, constantly, be taking in. His ecclesiastic position, thanks to D'Estissac, had been regularized by papal indult; but he had probably begun to feel, by this time, that the churchly life was not for him, that it was too cramped and confining a one. What, then, was he to do; what was he to become; what, as the young fellow of today says, was he to make of himself? Generalizations of the sort are both pompous and perilous, but, expanding upon one's own experience and observation, one may say that the average young man's life appears to have an earlier and a later period of *Sturm und Drang*, the first more cosmic and spiritual, more beautifully and youthfully idealistic, more in consonance with the Wordsworthian trails of glory, while the second is more narrowly personal and individual, a problem of between-me-and-the-world—in short, the sordid but intensely practical problem of gaining as pleasantly profitable a livelihood as is possible. François, some of his biographers would have us believe, had his *crise de conscience* at the time of his combat with the monks of Fontenay over the seizure of his and Amy's Greek books. Whether this be true or not, he must at least have thought things out and made something of a choice. Casting in one's lot with the modernists may be a youthful gesture, but it is a gesture that has its consequences, as any youth speedily discovers; and if the youth decides to stick it out, it means that he has, very likely, told himself the reason why he is sticking it out. And Rabelais was a modernist, even if the modernism of his day did happen to be a throwback to a pagan past (most modernisms will, upon close inspection, be found to be just such throwbacks). Let us assume, therefore, that he "knew where he stood," in so

far as a man may ever be said to possess such knowledge of the moment. But one may know where one stands without knowing, standing where one does, where one is going to lie down when night comes; and that, I believe, was Rabelais' case at this period of his life.

He had reached a stage which with us might be compared to that of the young college graduate, who has received, let us hope, a "liberal" education, and who is now standing on the verge of an as yet unselected professional career. It is at this point that the "grand tour" comes in; for we still have the thing if not the name. Our youth may pack himself off to the Left Bank, or he may go to Europe without going near the Left Bank, or he may go to Central America and shoot oil wells and the natives. It is not at all unusual in such a case for him to serve an apprenticeship in a number of lines and try out a number of institutions of higher learning. There seems to be something in travel, something in these wander-years, that responds to a need within—the need of a widened external impact and of seeing what the rest of the world is about.

In Rabelais' case, we may believe that he had already begun to think of medicine, just why and how we cannot say; but when, a few years later, he arrives at Montpellier, we find him making such rapid progress as could only be accounted for on the basis of previous studies. He no doubt, too, sampled other branches, such as civil and canonical law. He may have studied law at Poitiers, under that "Scottish doctor, Decretalipotens," or Robert Ireland, who died in 1561, after having held the chair of law there for the better part of a century. Law, medicine and theology—he flirted with them all; starting as a cleric, he became a physician,

and despite his strictures on the legal tribe, he had in him always a good deal of the lawyer; the age of high and intensive specialization had not yet set in.

We are not to forget that, at this date—say, 1526—François was no longer exactly a young man. Assuming that he was born in 1494, he was now all of thirty. Even when his birth-date is pushed up, his outward development would appear to be marked by a certain retardation. This may best be accounted for by the long years spent in a monastery; and Rabelais may have been one of those individuals who begin to show up late. The very consciousness that he was no longer a youngster may have sharpened, as such consciousness frequently does, the possessor's desire for inner and outer movement. It would have been altogether in the course of things for him to have talked the matter over with D'Estissac, and perhaps with Ardillon and others (among those others, the garrulous and kindly-intentioned Bouchet of the wife and eight). M. Maurois and his school might do much at this point. It was certainly without formal ecclesiastical approbation, but it must have been with D'Estissac's friendly connivance, that François began his medical studies, pursuing these, we may be sure, in Paris, at the favourite rendezvous of the student members of his order, the Hôtel Saint-Denis. It was when he came to matriculate openly at Montpellier that things could no longer go on as they had been going and some sort of sanction for his past conduct became necessary.

II

Pantagruel's academic itinerary (in Book Second, Chapter V.) may be taken as Rabelais' own. There is always a danger

in identifying any writer with his works, and many writers have protested against such a habit on the part of biographers and critics. The method is one which the conscientious compiler of a Life will, as a general rule, do well to avoid, or to practise sparingly. But is the case different with Rabelais? Professor Lefranc and the distinguished group of Rabelaisian scholars which centres about him believe that it is. They strenuously insist upon the essential close-to-life basis of his romance as a whole. Maître François, they say, who is noted for the specific nature of his detail, is never specific without good reason, and that reason usually has something to do with himself or his environment at some period of his life.

"Ever since we undertook to study the realistic elements of his (Rabelais') work," says Professor Lefranc, "we have never discovered the existence of one single detail which did not have some reason for being in Rabelais' personal memories or in the circumstances of his life. There is no exception to this rule, and there is no need to turn back and prove all over again what may be looked upon as an established fact."

And elsewhere, the same authority says:

"It is once more evident: all the elements of reality in Rabelais' work are capable of being explained and agree among themselves. This constant meeting with personal memories and realistic elements is by no means one of the least of the charms of this inimitable romance, in which the most astounding play of fancy is ever to be found coupled with a proper respect for the most meticulous realism."

It is Professor Lefranc himself who offers the corrective that is in order here. After remarking that most of the real-life identifications of Rabelais' characters have been made

since the old allegoric school of commentators gave way to the new school of documentary research, he adds:

"But this line of research, so fertile in results, should not be carried to the point of exaggeration. Story-tellers, the truth is, do not feel bound as a rule to make a slavish copy of any one individual, especially when it comes to creating a leading character for their work; they like to round out those features which they have borrowed from someone—an individual whom they have deliberately selected or one conceived in their imaginations—by mingling their own personal memories with yet other features borrowed from other individuals. Art, as is well known, has nothing in common with photography; it is a choice of realistic elements. And so, we must beware of any desire to discover, for example, in the two giants of the *Gargantua* or in Friar John, or in Panurge, . . . an exact portrait of any one person."

Pantagruel, then, is not Rabelais; but that does not mean that Pantagruel may not live through experiences through which his creator has passed. And in the chapter under consideration here, the evidence is unusually strong: the references to Poitiers, Maillezais, Ligugé, Fontenay-le-Comte, etc.; the allusions to Tiraqueau and Ardillon; above all, the minute and exact topographical detail throughout.

Let us, taking the evidence at its worth, and supplementing it with such external data as we have, see if we can reconstruct Rabelais' *Wanderjahre.*

III

Pantagruel's first stop, as it was, doubtless, his creator's, is Poitiers:

In accordance with this plan, he came to Poitiers to study, and his studies there helped him much. While he was at Poitiers, he noticed that the students had certain periods of leisure, but did not know what to do to pass the time away; and he was sorry for them. And so, one day, he took from a great stretch of rock, named Passelourdin, a huge stone, about twenty-four yards square and about ten and a half feet in thickness; and he placed this stone, with no effort at all, upon four pillars in the middle of a field, in order that the students, when they did not know what else to do, might find a pastime in climbing the stone and in feasting on its top, with many flagons, hams and pastries, carving their names upon it with a knife. This rock, at present, is called the Elevated Stone. In memory of this feat, no one to this day is permitted to matriculate in the University of Poitiers until he first has drunk from the Caballine Fountain of Croutelle, gone to Passelourdin and climbed the Elevated Stone.

Look at the *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* of G. Braun, and you will see what the Elevated Stone looked like in 1561, some thirty years after the period with which we are here dealing. Reference is to a partly ruined dolmen along the road from Saint-Saturnin to Vandouzil. The face of the rock was still intact in the eighteenth century, its dimensions being 6 metres 80 in length, 4 metres 60 in breadth and 83 centimetres in thickness. (These dimensions, it will be noted, are much inferior to those given by Rabelais.) Seventeenth-century guides were in the habit of pointing the place out as a curiosity. In the Braun picture, students may be seen carving their names upon the stone, but the

grain of the rock does not seem to have been well adapted to the purpose, since no trace of these inscriptions remains. As for the "Caballine Fountain of Croutelle," it still exists, in the form of a limpid spring, near Croutelle and at a distance of three miles from Poitiers. Other authors of Rabelais' time speak of it as a Fountain of Wisdom.

So much for the commentary. What Rabelais has done has been to take a natural feature of the landscape, which had become a students' landmark, and give it a gigantesque mythology.

François must have paid more than one visit to Poitiers, which then vied with Lyons as the second city of the kingdom. The Emperor Charles V., in passing through it in 1539, referred to it as a "large city," and there is a similar reference in Chapter XXXII. of the Second Book. La Fontaine, a century later, was to describe the town as "badly paved, full of students and swarming with priests and monks," which sounds not unlike a description of present-day Quebec (a survival, as a matter of fact, of La Fontaine's century). The outstanding features of the place appear to have fixed themselves firmly in François' mind: the *parloir aux bourgeois*, where dramatic performances were given; the Palais de Justice; the great bell of Poitiers, one of the largest and the heaviest in France, the gift of Duke Jean of Berry; etc. The château at Bonivet (Bonnivet), twelve miles from Poitiers, was to provide a model for the Abbey of Thélème. It was one of the sumptuous modern Renaissance structures, and was still in process of construction during Rabelais' lifetime, work on it not being completed until the middle of the seventeenth century (it was demolished in the latter part of the eighteenth). It had

been begun somewhere between 1513 and 1525 by Guillaume Gouffier, better known as "Monsieur the Admiral," the same who died at Pavia. It is significant that in the early editions of the *Gargantua* (Chapter LIII.), we find "more magnificent than the one at Bonivet," while in the definitive edition of 1542, the text reads: "than the one at Bonivet, at Chambord or at Chantilly." This means that Rabelais at that time had seen Bonivet, but had not seen the other two equally famous châteaux; he saw Chambord and Chantilly later, and it is nothing unusual to find our author writing into his work, in the course of revisions, the results of his broadening life-experience. It is possible that he had visited Bonivet in the company of Geoffroy d'Estissac.

As for the University of Poitiers, it ranked as the second in France, chiefly on account of the excellence of its law faculty; the faculties of medicine and theology were not so important at the time. The university had been established by Charles VII., to replace the University of Paris, when Paris became English territory. There is no record of any matriculation on Maître François' part, but there is, in addition to Dr. Decretalipotens, Judge Bridlegoose's "in the days when I was a law student at Poitiers," which last sounds like another bit of biographical material. One thing is certain, and that is that Rabelais possessed an amazing knowledge of the law and of legal procedure for anyone not a jurist or an advocate. Bridlegoose's citations alone are enough to establish the point. And by the way, Fonsbeton, Bridlegoose's district, formerly believed to be an imaginary locality, has now been identified as Fonbeton, the name of a spring which still exists along the road from Ligugé to Poitiers; and as for Toucheronde, the official who

gets Bridlegoose into trouble (Book Third, Chapter XXXIX.), M. Plattard finds the name to be that of a hamlet on the left-hand side of the road from Ligugé to Croutelles. The whole Bridlegoose episode, indeed, brims with local colour—including the tale of the Fixer of Cases. Even those overwhelmingly funny citations of Bridlegoose's may have been popular texts or subjects for student jest at the University.

From that thorough immersion in the law which he must have had somewhere, at one time or another, and from his intimate acquaintance with the *gens de robe* and their ways, François was to carry away an attitude of mind toward the profession which was not precisely a flattering one, and which was to creep out constantly in his work. In addition to the Shysteroos of Book Fourth, there is in the first book of the Pantagruel a lengthy episode, of several chapters, which has been taken, and not unjustifiably so, as a burlesque of the legal eloquence of an age. At the beginning of that episode, there is an allusion to

. . . the foolish opinions of Accursius, Baldus, Bartolus, Castro, Imola, Hippolytus, Panormitano, Bertachino, Alexender, Curtius and those other pompous old blockheads who never understood even the simplest law of the Pandects, and who never were anything but a lot of big booby-calves, ignorant of everything that is necessary to a comprehension of the law. For it is quite certain that they had no knowledge of either the Greek or the Latin language, but only of the Gothic and barbaric tongue. And yet, our laws were first taken from the Greeks . . . while in the second place, those laws have been turned into a Latin that is the most

elegant and ornate to be found anywhere. . . . How, then, could those old dotards ever have been able to understand the text of the laws, who never saw a good Latin book, as is obvious from their style, which is that of a chimney-sweep, a cook or a kitchen-mechanic, rather than of a jurisconsult?

Moreover, seeing that our laws have been transplanted from the soil of moral and natural philosophy, how could those old fools ever hope to understand them, who, by God! know less about philosophy than does my mule? With regard to literature and the humanities, and a knowledge of ancient history, they are less burdened with anything of that sort than a toad is with feathers, despite the fact that the codes are full of such allusions, without a knowledge of which they cannot be understood.

Rabelais would make, apparently, a clean sweep of all the old juridical commentators. In this, he is echoing—and at the same time, no doubt, as is his wont, exaggerating—Humanist opinion. Occasionally, there may creep in a note of something more than jesting, a note of real bitterness, as when he remarks, in the person of Pantagruel: "I do not believe . . . that a case decided by the throwing of dice would be any the worse handled, come what might, than it would be if it had passed through those corrupt and blood-stained hands." But on the whole, Maître François is looking for the humour, rather than for any possible pathos, in this as in other situations. In the Bayseul-Humevesne dispute, for example, he is merely elaborating upon a theme of traditional and popular satire. In our own day, we hear much talk, in the newspapers, by newspaper-

readers, and from the public platform, with regard to the crying necessity of simplifying legal procedure. The same was true in Rabelais' time. Not only the Humanists from Budé down, but the leaders of the legal profession themselves, were loud in their vociferations on the subject. Among the writers, Clément Marot, for one, is a good deal more violent than Rabelais when he approaches the theme. Rabelais was not a reformer. It is possible that he just barely missed being one, but his sense of humour and his love of horse-play always stepped in in time to save him. The author's sympathies are, decidedly, with his old friend, Judge Bridlegoose. Professor Lefranc believes that the farcical "trial" in the *Pantagruel* is too far-fetched for satire, too overdrawn to be even a takeoff on the forms of legal procedure then in vogue, "since all the ordinary features of that procedure are thrown to the winds," and M. Plattard adds: "The speeches in Chapters XI., XII. and XIII. (Book Second), whatever may be said of them, are not a caricature of the legal eloquence of the time." It is a bit hard to agree with this. Rabelais, in all likelihood, started out with satiric intent, but his horse-play got the better of him before he had gone far.

It seems not improbable that François, upon first going to Poitiers, in setting out on his travels, turned to the law as a prospective profession, for we shall find him continuing his legal studies at the University of Bourges. Suppose we go on with the Pantagrueline chronicle:

Afterward, in reading the stirring Chronicles of his ancestors, he discovered that Geoffroy of Lusignan, known as Big-Toothed Geoffroy, the grandfather of the daughter-

in-law of the eldest sister of the aunt of the son-in-law of the uncle of the daughter-in-law of his stepmother, had been buried at Maillezais; and so, one day, he took leave of absence, in order to visit the place like the dutiful chap that he was.

Leaving Poitiers with some of his companions, he went by way of Ligugé, stopping off to visit the noble Ardillon who was abbot there, then by way of Lusignan, Sanxay, Celles, Coulonges and Fontenay-le-Comte, stopping off in the last-named place to greet the learned Tiraqueau, from which place he and his comrades proceeded to Maillezais, where he visited the sepulchre of the same Geoffroy with the Big Tooth.

Pantagruel is here rambling through the very scenes of Rabelais' own early school-days. "Geoffroy with the Big Tooth" is none other than Geoffroy de Lusignan, who, back in 1223, had burned the Abbey of Maillezais, and who had been compelled by the pope to rebuild it. Rebuild it he did, but he exacted his toll in return by forcing the monks to erect his effigy above the portal. In 1834, excavations in the choir of the church brought to light a warrior's stone head, which appeared to be that of Big-Toothed Geoffroy; for at his death, the monks, forgetful of their parishioner's past life and mindful only of his later penitence and generosity, had put up a statue in the abbatial church, and it was from this statue that the head probably came. Geoffroy, as a matter of historic fact, had been buried at Vouvent, but the tradition had come to be that his remains rested at Maillezais. This was but one of any number of legends which François picked up from the soil of Poitou; in the course of his

hero's academic journeyings, the author takes time out for a little folklore.

IV

He did not, after this, return to Poitiers, for the reason that he wished to visit the other universities of France. And so, going on to La Rochelle, he set sail for Bordeaux, in which place he did not find a great deal of sport—nothing, indeed, except a few longshoremen playing Spanish cards (luettes) *on the beach.*

François must have left Poitou about 1527 (I adopt M. Plattard's date). His leaving, M. Clouzot speculates, may have had something to do with the fact that D'Estissac's nephew, Louis, had now reached a marriageable age (he was married in 1527) and Maître François' services, assuming he was the young man's tutor, were no longer required. His desire to visit "the universities of France" was a wholly natural one. The Humanists were in general inclined to look down patronizingly on the universities on account of the prevailing hostility of these institutions toward the new *litterae humaniores.* Nevertheless, they recognized the fact that the universities were the repositories of theology, law and the natural sciences, including medicine; and while they insisted that a familiarity with the classic tongues was essential to those sciences and disciplines, they admitted that, under the circumstances, the only thing to do was to take such courses as the universities offered and to make the best of them, especially in view of the fact that here and there a ray of hope was to be discovered in the person of an enlightened member (that is, a classicist) of some faculty or other. It is natural, too, that François should first

have turned his steps toward Bordeaux and Toulouse. He may even previously have visited these two university towns in the company of the Bishop of Maillezais and the latter's nephew. Through his and Amy's friend, Amaury Bouchard, the same one who had come so gallantly to the rescue of the feminine sex, he may have heard of Briand Vallée, Seigneur du Douhet, parliamentary counsellor at Bordeaux from 1527 to 1544 and "a man of letters who had made his home an asylum for the Muses." This is the Douhet, "the most learned, the cleverest and the wisest of them all," who is alluded to in Book Second, Chapter X.

We may picture François, having determined upon visiting Bordeaux, going to La Rochelle, which is still home territory, and there, upon the eve of taking ship, wandering down to the harbor. For La Rochelle was then a famous port and one of the richest cities in the realm, on account of its commerce with the New World. Did François watch, that night, the great iron chain being stretched across the harbour, between the two towers at the entrance of the port? This chain (mentioned in Book Second, Chapter IV.) was an historic institution; we find a reference to it as far back as 1345, and it was still in existence up to the seventeenth century. Did he look up at the tower down by the seashore, known as "The Lantern" (referred to in Chapter XXXII. of the posthumous Fifth Book), which in the sixteenth century would seem to have held a beacon for mariners? Did he reflect that, on the morrow, that harbour-chain would lift, and he would go sailing forth to meet his Destiny? Was he thrilled about it, as a young man should be, and as a romantic biographer would like to have him be; or did he, rather, spend his time in picking up a sea-term or two to add to

that astounding vocabulary of his which, three centuries later, was to be the despair of nautical philologists? François, if we may hazard a guess, did not spend a vast deal of time in introspection; his was a nature that looked outward rather than in.

The University of Bordeaux at this time was in a state of decay, and soon to close its doors from lack of students. This accounts for the "longshoremen playing Spanish cards on the beach." Rabelais' realistic detail is to be noted here; he observes even the variety of card-deck that is used. The deck referred to was one of Spanish origin, and such as is still employed in Brittany and other provinces along the littoral formerly frequented by the Spaniards. This is one of the points at which Sir Thomas Urquhart fails to catch Rabelais' colour; he has: "some Marriners and Lightermen a wrestling on the key or strand by the riverside."

The University, indeed, probably had not been François' attraction in going to Bordeaux; that attraction was, rather, the Seigneur du Douhet of whom we have spoken above, and whom Rabelais must have met at the time when Douhet held the royal bench of Saintes. Vallée, or Douhet, was to be another lasting influence in Rabelais' mental life; it is he who, in the Baysecul-Humevesne episode, is made the champion of the enlightened ideas of the Humanist jurisconsults as opposed to those of the "Gothic" age. Like D'Estissac, Tiraqueau and Ardillon, Vallée liked to keep open house for the intelligentsia of the day, and his temperament appears to have been rather close to Rabelais' own.

This new host of François' had somehow acquired the reputation of being an atheist, though the evidence appears

to be that he did not deserve it. Inasmuch as Professor Lefranc and others would make Rabelais himself out to have been an atheist, the question is, possibly, one of some importance for our biography.

The imputation of atheism came in the course of an amusing battle of wits which took place between Douhet and one Antoine de Gouvéa, another Humanist of the town, a verbal fray in which François, if we are to accept as his certain verses which have come down to us, took a part at the end. De Gouvéa had composed an epigram in which he accused Douhet of hiding in the cellar when it thundered, for the reason that he did not believe in a God. Vallée's reply was: "Antoine de Gouvéa, the son of a converted Jew, does not believe that there is a God, either in the cellar or in the skies." In the lines which Rabelais is supposed to have written, the author plays upon the idea of the wine-cellar, but cleverly sidesteps the atheist issue. A prose translation of the Latin verses runs:

No sooner are children conscious of the wrath of their fathers than they run to their mothers' laps, having learned by experience that they will find there a mildness that will outweigh their fathers' ire. In the same manner, when Jove is vexed, and the heavens are to be heard bellowing, you seek refuge in the lap of your aged mother. The lap of your aged mother is the wine-cellar. No safer asylum could be found against the thunderbolt; since it is a well known fact that Jupiter's three-pointed missiles strike lighthouses, Acroceraunian peaks, tall towers and oaks, but never the vats stored in wine-cellars; for lightning always gives Bacchus a wide berth.

As for Douhet, the atheist, it is to be kept in mind that he was the founder of a chair of theology in the Collège de Guyenne at Bordeaux. True, the chair, having been established under the patronage of the too Protestant St. Paul, was subsequently annulled; but the incident does not have an atheistic color; it would indicate, if anything, that Vallée had a mild clerical sympathy for the new reform in the Church, at a time when that "reform" had not as yet come to be known for what it was.

And while we are on the subject, it was at this period of his life, and while in this part of the country, that Rabelais, we may assume, made the acquaintance of one at whom he was later (in the Letter to Erasmus) to hurl the epithet of "atheist," and who was to become one of Maître François' first important enemies. This was the eminent Julius Cæsar Scaliger, who, according to the historian De Thou, was a man of such talent and erudition that he was not to be ranked below any of the ancients, while his own age could not show his equal. Scaliger, who was, among other things, an able physician (Rabelais gives him credit for that), had come to Agen, in the Bordeaux region, in 1525, as physician to the bishop of that city. Here, he taught a school, whither his reputation attracted many earnest and promising students. Among these was Jean Schyron, whom François was later to have as a master in medicine at Montpellier (the "noble Schyron"—Rabelais spells it Scurron—mentioned in Book Fourth, Chapter XLIII.). It seems likely that François sat in at Scaliger's lectures. Of their falling out, we shall hear more. Scaliger had barely escaped being burned at the stake as an atheist, or at least as a Lutheran. Two things alone had saved him: he had retained Briand

Vallée, Rabelais' friend, as his counsel; and he had excused his heresies on the ground that he had, quite understandably, imbibed certain Averroistic teachings at the University of Padua. It is significant that he and Rabelais did not become friends.

François' next stop is Toulouse:

. . . where he learned how to dance very well, and how to juggle the two-handed sword, as is the custom among the students of that university; but he did not stay there very long, when he perceived that they were in the habit of burning their regents alive like red herrings. Speaking of this, he remarked:

"I hope to God I never die like that, for I am naturally quite thirsty enough without being heated up any more."

Rabelais is here getting ahead of his own life-story, for the burning of Jean de Caturce of Limoux, which is the event referred to here, occurred in 1532, or just before the first book of the *Pantagruel* was published. A timely topicality is one of Maître François' most striking characteristics; in revising his books, he very frequently takes the trouble to write in allusions that will bring them up to date; in this case, the *Pantagruel* being published in the fall of 1532 (and not in 1524 as Anatole France has it!), he is making use of a last-minute piece of news. It is possible, of course, that he did not visit Toulouse until later, or that he paid a second visit; but we are, after all, fairly safe in assuming that it was a part of his itinerary at this period.

The Caturce incident, even though it did not occur until later, will serve to show the tenor of the town and of the times. Caturce, who held the chair of law at the University,

had made certain remarks at a state banquet one night which caused him to be suspected of Lutheranism. He was imprisoned in the month of January, 1532, and was burned alive in the Place Saint-Étienne of the city the following June. Rabelais' off-handed "red-herring" remark is not to be taken as indicating a callousness on the part of the student body. The latter, according to Crespin's *Martirol*, were deeply affected by the edifying death of their professorial hero: "He never ceased, with his last sigh, to praise and glorify God, and to exhort the people to come to a knowledge of Him. It would be impossible to describe the fruit which his death bore, especially among the students." Caturce's death will be found related in Étienne Dolet's second *Declamation contre Toulouse*. The town was a hotbed of Humanists and Lutherans. Among the former was Jean de Pins, the most famous of all, and his disciple, Georges Bishop of Rodez, who was to become Rabelais' friend of long standing. François may have formed two other friendships here: with Dolet, who was to become his printer and, according to Rabelais, his betrayer, and who was to pay with his life at the stake for words that Rabelais wrote, if tradition be true; and with Jean de Boyssonné, of whom we shall hear in connection with a certain curious affair, the only one with an amorous tinge in Maître François' career.

Then, he came on to Montpellier, where he found very good wines of Mirevaux and some cheerful company; and there he thought that he would start studying medicine. But he decided that the calling was far too tiresome and melancholy a one, and that physicians always smelled of enemas,

like old devils. Accordingly, he resolved to study law; but seeing that there were but three lousy wretches and one bald-headed legist in the place, he left.

Here, once more, we seem to be out of chronological order. Or did Rablais visit Montpellier before he ended up there as a medical matriculant in September, 1530? It does not make a deal of difference; a more important point is that "thought he would start studying medicine," followed by "he resolved to study law." Pantagruel's indecision as to the choice of a profession may be taken as reflecting that of his creator, at that period of the latter's life which is here being described under thin veils. François, after having made up his mind that the sacerdotal life was not for him, must have wavered between the two other important callings, law and medicine. Did he, having sampled the law, try medicine, give it up, go back to law, and finally come back to medicine as his choice? It is not surprising that he gave up the law, if he started studying it at Montpellier; for while the medical faculty at Montpellier was a renowned one, being noted for its empirical spirit, the law faculty had fallen into a state of decay.

He then came to Avignon; and he had not been there three days before he fell in love, for the women there are very fond of playing serre cropyere, *seeing that this is papal territory.*

What are we to make of this? A spicy hint for the modern rapid-fire type of biographer, who has learned his—or her—lesson from the contemporary Gaul. It probably means, simply, that François Rabelais, if we are to identify him throughout this passage with his Pantagruel, was, like

most university youth, human. Expansion at such a point impresses this chronicler as too obvious to be of interest; adventures of the mind are so much more exciting—and dangerous. As to the "papal territory," Avignon, under the government of legates and vice-legates of the Holy See, enjoyed, it is reported, a certain freedom of manners and an easy way of life which appears to have held a fascination for the visiting stranger.

Pantagruel, under conduct of Epistemon, next goes to Valence in Dauphiny, where he witnesses the rowdyism between the townsmen and the students. Then, "with three steps and a jump," he is at Angers, "where he found himself very well taken care of, and he would have stayed there some little while, if it had not been that the plague drove him away." Here, assuredly, we are not dealing with strict autobiographic realism, for while there was a violent epidemic in Anjou in 1518–19, with further outbreaks in 1530–32, there is no record of one during the years from 1527–30. Again, Rabelais is writing in last-minute detail; or once more, the reference may be to a later visit. Of these possible later peregrinations of Rabelais', something will be said in a following chapter. Whether or not Pantagruel, in this particular chapter, *is* Rabelais, we may feel sure that the latter had at some time visited all the places therein described; the detail is too convincing.

We next find our giant-hero at Bourges, "where he studied for quite a long time, and to considerable advantage, in the college of law." Here, we have a definite statement as to Pantagruel's (Rabelais'?) legal studies. Bourges, birthplace of Louis XI., boasted a university which had been founded by that monarch in 1463, and which was

famous for its legal branch, of which the Italian jurist, Alciati, was the great and shining light. Rabelais does not speak of Alciati, whose coming had created such a stir among the student body; and M. Plattard thinks he may have missed meeting up with him. But François must have spent some little time in the city, judging by the thoroughness with which he came to know it. Allusions to the various points of interest in the town are numerous in his work,—including the famous "Butter-Tower" of the Saint-Étienne Cathedral, which "melted in the sun" on the 31st. of December, 1506. This tower received its name from the fact that it had been erected with money given by the faithful in return for permission to eat butter during Lent. The "Butter-Tower," so-called, was not the one that actually fell—Rabelais is confused here; it was its predecessor, newly completed, which crashed to the ground on that New Year's Eve in the early part of the century. This is only one of a number of equally vivid memories.

At Bourges, Pantagruel gets a new light on the law:

He would remark, upon occasion, that the law-books impressed him as being a handsome golden robe of state, and an enormously precious one, but one, nevertheless, embroidered with mire.

"*For,*" *he would say,* "*there are no books in the world so handsome, so ornate, so elegant as are the texts of the Pandects; but their embroidery, that is to say, the Gloss of Accursius, is so befouled, so infamous and so infectious that there is nothing in it but ordure and vileness.*"

This is the voice of the new Humanism speaking, through Rabelais' mouth. The mediæval glossarists of the Pandects,

of whom Accursius was the most famous, were an object of universal contempt among the disciples of the Newer Learning, who termed these commentators *non commentatores sed tormentatores juris,* "not commentators, but torturers of the law."

Pantagruel then goes on—and we may be sure that Rabelais did, too—to Orléans, the University of which place had a reputation for its faculty of civil law. Inasmuch as the University of Paris taught only the canon and not the civil law, Orléans had come to be the resort of those young Parisians who wished to take up the latter branch. As a result, it had become something of a swank university town, with tennis courts, dancing and other diversions in abundance. The students, no doubt, followed our friend Pantagruel's example in refraining from study, since, as the regent quoted by Rabelais remarks, "there is nothing so harmful to the sight as a malady of the eyes." The tone of the place is excellently hit off in the motto which Pantagruel composes for one of the graduates:

A tennis-ball in your belly-band;
And a racquet in your hand;
A law-book in your doctor's hood;
Scrape your feet, and scrape 'em good;
And you're a doctor, understand.

Orléans was especially famous for its tennis-courts; at the beginning of the sixteenth century, according to the author (LeMaire, 1648) of the *Antiquités d'Orléans,* there were forty of these. In this, Orléans had it over Poitiers, which could show not more than fifteen or twenty. Ecclesiastics, as well as the students, were ardent enthusiasts, and

the Bishop of Orléans received from his chapter a revenue (contested in 1525) to keep him in racquets.

The stress throughout on sports and athletics is to be noted; one would almost think he was in an American university atmosphere. Rabelais, or at least his hero, seems to be even more interested in these pursuits than in those of the mind; and the educational scheme which he outlines in his *Gargantua*, in contrast to the theories of most of the Humanists, lays a considerable stress on the physical side, being a synthesis of the gentleman's needful exercises of the old chivalric days with the learning of the *clerc*, the new gymnastic of the intellect. This was also a trend of the times in popular education; each university then had its favourite sport.

But at Orléans, Rabelais was to encounter other and a little more stimulating contacts. In the city at the time (1528–9) and studying at the University were such men as John Calvin, his friend, Pierre Daniel, the Hellenist, and Claude Framberge, a friend of Daniel's. A quarter of a century after, we shall find François corresponding with Daniel and Framberge (see Rabelais' *Letter to the Bailiff of Bailiffs*). It is possible that he met Calvin here and at this time. Some four years later, in 1533, it is to Daniel that Calvin will be conveying the news of the condemnation of Rabelais' *Pantagruel*.

François is meeting important people, and important events are occurring in the outside world. It is at this point that he turns his eyes toward Paris.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PROPTER BONITATEM VINI

They finally reached Paris, where Gargantua refreshed himself for two or three days, dispensing good cheer with his followers, while they made inquiries as to what learned gentry there were in the city, and investigated the kind of wine drunk there.

Book First, Chapter XVI.

I

ON that day, in the year 1528 or 1529, when the pie-powdered François rode into Paris, whether on a Great and Numidian Mare or on some humbler and more prosaic steed, the French Renaissance was just beginning to burst into its first gorgeous bloom. The general date is an important one, politically and otherwise. It was, let us not forget, in 1527 that Rome was sacked, while by 1530 Charles V. had completed his pacification of Italy and had set up a Spanish hegemony in the peninsula; it was Ave and Vale for the Renaissance in the land of its birth. It was in 1530, also, that Copernicus put what were virtually the finishing touches to his *Commentariolus*, giving a first fascinating glimpse of the new heavens, above an earth which, since 1492 and 1498, had not been the same.

"With this date (1530)," says Professor Lefranc, "there came the period of the great awakening; everyone, in spite of imminent hardships and impending struggles, felt joyous and alert. A boundless curiosity laid hold of minds. This was the moment when it seemed that one could hear, throughout France one might say, that formidable and symbolic cry which Gargantua gave upon coming into the light of this world: 'A drink! A drink! A drink!' "

It was in 1530 that Francis I. was to found the historic Collège de France, to encourage the study of the classical and oriental tongues; Humanism had won the keys of the City. Mathurin Cordier and other forerunners of modern pedagogy were to follow. The Humanist *cénacles* in the various smaller towns—at Toulouse, at Lyons, at Montpellier, in Poitou, at Fontenay-le-Comte, at Orléans, at Bourges, at Autun—were to be fruitful and multiply and replenish an earth that was all too conscious of its aridity. The brilliant decade from 1530 to 1540 was soon to be ushered in.

As for Paris, it was in many respects the city that Villon knew; yet, it was not the same—quite; it was, after all, Paris of the Renaissance. And yet, Paris, whatever its changes, does not change. The home of the Parrhesians, the *Proud-Talkers*, is still, as it was in the days of Ariosto, "made up and pieced together of all nations":

non è terra per cristianitade
Che non abbia qua dentro cittadini.

(Orlando Furioso, XVI., 35)

Which sounds as modern as though the author had just come in from the terrace of the Café du Dôme. Dante, too (in

the *Paradiso*, X., 136–38), speaks of the "*vico degli strami*," or the rue du Fouarre (Rabelais' "rue du Feurre," Urquhart's "fodder-street"), the same street where Pantagruel "held forth against all the regents, liberal arts students and orators, and set them all on their behinds."

This cosmopolitan, proud-speaking character of the Parisian populace Rabelais has excellently caught; it must have been one of his first impressions, since it seems to have remained the strongest, most outstanding one; and he has embodied it in a number of extremely pat anecdotes. Among other things, he gets that passion which the Parisians—who, by the way, are not French—have always had for anything in the nature of a show, the very latest novelty:

For the people of Paris are so stupid, such ninnies and so foolish by nature that a juggler, a pardon-pedlar, a mule with bells, or a fiddler in the middle of a public square will gather a bigger crowd than a good evangelic preacher ever could.

There is the incident of Seigny Joan and the roast, in Book Third, Chapter XXXVII.: "and the stupid Parisians came running up from all sides to see the fun." In the sixteenth century, it was a fiddler, a pardon-pedlar or Seigny Joan ringing his augurial coin; today, it is Josephine Baker or the Duncan Sisters: the principle is the same. Maître François likewise gets the native genius of the Gaul for revolution:

At this, all the town was moved to the point of sedition; for you are doubtless aware that they are so ready at this sort of thing that foreign nations are inclined to wonder at the patience of the Kings of France; for their monarchs do

not, in justice, restrain them, in view of the inconveniences which would ensue from day to day.

In short, what he gets is the essential comic opera *décor* of the French capital—and this is uttered with no disparagement whatever, by one who never is at home except in Paris, and who never feels that he is at the centre of the intellective universe except when he is looking out over a good brandy and the place de l'Opera (even though the Café de la Paix tourist may not appear to be intellecting). The Frenchman himself has been known to give expression to a similar view. I quote from Stendhal's *Souvenirs d'Égotisme:*

"*Today, I esteem Paris. I grant that, in the matter of courage, it is to be given first rank, as it is in the matter of cuisine, as it is for* l'ésprit. *But it does not seduce me any the more for all of that. It seems to me that there is always something of an aspect of comedy in its character. Young fellows born at Paris, of provincial fathers with a certain amount of masculine energy, . . . impress me as etiolated beings, concerned only with clothes and their external appearance, the good taste of their* chapeau gris, *the proper knotting of their cravat, such as the MM. Feburier, Viollet-le-Duc, etc. For my part, I am unable to conceive a man without a little* masculine energy, *without a little consistency and depth in his ideas, etc. All of which are things rarely enough to be met with in Paris. . . .*"

This, of course, is the harshness of the indigene speaking, as in the *Logique de Port-Royal:* "*De quelque pays que vous soyez, vous ne devez croire que ce que vous seriez disposé à croire si vous étiez d'un autre pays.*" The picture is not an exaggerated one, when a Frenchman paints it in;

it becomes exaggerated when one who is not a Frenchman attempts to copy it. The fact is, there is, and has been always, about Paris a certain divine lightness of touch which may be taken as concealing those placid-running deeps which the French genius is commonly credited with harbouring. And it was this and other of the more universal and sempiternal, if after all more superficial, aspects of the city which would seem to have impinged first and most deeply upon our François' now fast maturing fancy. The point is, these are such impressions as he never could have acquired without a personal visit and a somewhat protracted stay.

II

And François, like his Pantagruel and his Panurge, knew his Left Bank, of that there can be no manner of doubt—that teeming, swarming, noisy, disputating and brawling Quarter, with its little, narrow, crazily crooked, fantastically winding streets—does one longer need to describe The Quarter, in these days of the Third Class Tourist? It is, needless to say, not the same Quarter, not the same Rive Gauche that the founder of Pantagruelism and his bound-to-be-cuckolded jester knew. Certain flavorous old thoroughfares, with savoury names and unsavoury reputations, are no more. The Champ-Gaillard, for example, is scarcely to be compensated by the modern rue d'Arras, or the Cul de Sac by the contemporary rue Greneta. The Champ-Gaillard even had the honour of a special ditty (the *Ténèbres du Champ-Gaillard*):

Quand vient au Champ gaillard entrer
Premier on vient a recontrer

Ruffiens et gros macquereaulx,
Lesquels vous viendront a monstrer
Putains qui se viennent monstrer
Chascun jour dessus les carreaulx.

("As one enters the Champ-Gaillard, the first thing one meets with is a lot of ruffians and big pimps, who will come to show you the Girls who come there every day to show themselves upon the pavement.") Where, too, are the *estuves à femme* (the women's hot baths) of the Abreuvoir-Mâcon, which ran down to the Seine? Nearby was the Vieille-Boucherie, whose houses of pleasure are said to have been regulated by ordinance of St. Louis. A few of these old bright-light streets lasted valiantly, at least in name and memory; such was the Hulieu (Huslieu), the name of which was preserved down to the nineteenth century, in the rue du Grand Hurleur and the rue du Petit Hurleur, over by Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs; the Hulieu rivalled the Champ-Gaillard in notoriety. The Val d'Amour of Glatigny, where *ribaudes* came *pour commettre le péchié;* des Marmousets; Cocatrix; d'Enfer; de Perpignan: the whole sector long since has vanished, like certain "districts" in American cities; and it is to be doubted if the "*Ennuyez-pas, Monsieur?*" of the lady who sits before an unsipped apéritif in the boulevard Saint-Michel is, when all is said, quite the same. Even in Rabelais' time, certain changes had taken, or were taking, place. The rue de Perpignan once had been the rue Charoui, so named from a wine-shop, the *Char Dore* (*de carro aurico*):

En Charoui—bonne taverne achiez ovri.

The fifteenth-century rue des Poulies, which led from the

rue St.-Honoré to the Quai de l'École, had become the rue de Bourbon, so named from the hotel de Bourbon; etc. That other François, who also once roamed this quarter, would have missed certain landmarks and discovered certain innovations. As to changes since Rabelais' time, they fortunately have not always altered the physiognomy of the Quarter that he knew. The opening of the Pont-Neuf created certain new thoroughfares, such as the rue Dauphine, the rue Christine and the rue d'Anjou, but it left certain others, such as the rue Saint-André-des-Arts and the rue des Grands-Augustins, untouched. Go to the present No. 54 of the rue Saint-André-des-Arts, enter the place of the little tobacconist whom you will find there, and you will be standing on the spot where, in all probability, François Rabelais resided while in Paris, during this youthful period of his life.

The Quarter, in Rabelais' time, was a loud and a merry one; we do not need Panurge or the Limousin Student to tell us that, though they do tell us vividly enough; there is an abundance of external evidence to the same effect. The boulevard Saint-Michel has long been famous—ever since the days of Philippe-Auguste, at least—for the roystering character of its student and other life. A Frenchman hardly can write upon the subject without becoming sentimental; he is more than likely to ring in an allusion to Verlaine and the latter's *absinthe verte*, or even to Huysmans and Baudelaire, though just what those gentlemen may have had to do with the *Quartier* is not always clear. Until one comes to doubt whether, after all, it was quite so roystering as it has been made out to be. But read some of the old records, and we are convinced once more. Particularly, when we hear

of the bloody frays between the students and the law, between the ecclesiastical and the civil authorities. In 1304, by way of instance, there was a certain student by the name of Pierre le Barbier. Pierre, who happened to be a cleric, had been convicted of murder, and had been sentenced and hanged by order of the Marshal of Paris. The *Official* of the Church of Paris thereupon convoked

"*for the 8th of September, the day of the Nativity of the Virgin, the curates of Paris, the chapter of Notre-Dame, the three arch-deacons, the two arch-priests, to repair at the hour of tierce to the Church of Saint-Barthélemy, thence to march in solemn procession, with cross and banners, to the Marshal's house, there to cast stones at the house and to pronounce in a loud voice the awful formula: 'Get thee behind me, get thee behind me, Satan! Make restitution to our Holy Mother the Church, whom thou hast injured and dishonored by trespassing upon her privileges; if thou dost not so, mayst thou meet with the same fate as Dathan and Abiram, who were buried alive in the earth.*"

And Pierre Jumeau, who was the Provost of Paris, was, we learn from the chronicle of Menorval,

"*deprived of his office, and was obliged by the King to ask pardon of the University, to endow two chaplaincies, to take the body down from the scaffold himself, to kiss it on the mouth, to deliver the remains to the rector, returning from the scaffold to the Church of the Preaching Friars, where the* clerc *was most honorably interred* (fut moult honorablement enterré), *the Marshal placing his hand upon the bier and repeating: 'Good people, you here behold the scholar whom I wrongfully and without cause put to death.*

Pray for his soul!' And he afterward went to Avignon to be absolved by Pope Benedict II. from his excommunication."

All this—the gallow's-colour and all—sounds extremely Villonesque. But it occurred more than two hundred years before Rabelais came to Paris. Not only do two centuries, even in a less rapidly shifting era, bring their inescapable changes; but things of themselves have a certain *settling* quality, sad to say,—or is it the diffraction of retrospect? —and in spite of Panurge and his pranks on the Watch, in spite of his barrel and his Bourbonnais Tart, it is to be doubted if the Parisian student-quarter in 1530 was quite so rowdy on the physical side as it was in Villon's day. There had doubtless been, for one thing, something in the way of an adjustment between the rival authorities, the civil and the ecclesiastic, so far as student hangings and the like were concerned. But the Rive Gauche was, we may believe, still turbulent enough—certainly so, in contrast with the present, when student soap-boxings at election time provide the chief hilarity in the vicinity of the Sorbonne. The difference, in other words, between Rabelais' Left Bank and Villon's becomes so minute as to be practically negligible when compared to the gulf of respectability which separates our day from the sixteenth century. And anything which the early-Renaissance period might have lost in the matter of physical violence, it made up for in intellectual rowdiness. In this latter respect, despite all the schoolmen and famous visitors of the past—Scotus, Bacon, Aquinas, Lully, Dante himself if tradition does not lie—the Quarter, in mere matter of wrangle and jangle, of "artless masters"

(*Maistres inertes*) and their theses, dirty (physically dirty) doctors and liripipiumed disputants—had it over an age when Scholasticism and the teachings of the enduringly great Scholastics had not as yet become a subject of too frequently merited jest.

For the Left Bank was filled with schools and belated Schoolmen, and hence manifested that false and wordy vitality which is to be associated with the decline of any, however valid, system. There was the Sorbonne, that *pauvre maison*, founded (by Robert de Sorbon, Louis XI.'s chaplain, in 1250) "to receive and give instruction to students in theology." There was the College of Navarre, which stood on the summit of Sainte-Geneviève, on the present site of the École Polytechnique, in the vicinity of the rues Bordet (rue Descartes), Saint-Geneviève, Champ-Gaillard, Traversine, Bon-Puits and Clopin. This institution had been founded by Jeanne of Navarre, in 1309. There was the College of Montaigu, that "*colliege de pouillerie*," to lift Ponocrates' expressive phrase, but one for which the English is a trifle too squeamish. This institution, widely malodorous in its day, stood where the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève does now. It numbered two hundred poor scholars, or "*capettes*," who were poorly clad and insufficiently nourished, and who lodged in infected quarters, swarming with vermin. Erasmus, who had been a student there, will confirm the statement; see his *Colloquies*. He had fallen ill there, as the result of occupying an unsanitary room and being fed on putrid eggs. The college regulations, in the year 1503, even anticipated the presence of lice and provided for their destruction. It was here that Peter Tempest (Pierre Tempeste), noted as the flogger of little children,

held forth as principal; he died in 1530; so Rabelais must have come in on the close of his reign. Tempeste's pupils, as we learn from Claude Malingre's *Antiquités de Paris*, used to make up songs about him, and the punning Latin line which Panurge quotes, at the conclusion of Chapter XXI., Book Fourth, may be a steal from one of these snatches; for the prevailing opinion of Maître Pierre, see Panurge, *ibidem*. In addition to these institutions, there were any number of "*pedagogies*," or boarding-schools, monks' colleges, etc. As for the University of Paris, it comprised four faculties: Theology; Liberal Arts; Canon Law; and Medicine. Theology and the Arts alone flourished, and instruction was overwhelmingly oral.

For it was an age of Talk, not alone at Paris, but elsewhere; it was this same scholastic passion for rhetoric which had led to the posting of Luther's celebrated theses at Wittenberg; the proceeding, in the first place had been a strictly academic one, a thesis not being in any manner a commitment, and Luther himself had been amazed at what followed. In Paris, one of the favourite rendezvous of the talkers was the "Fodder Street" (rue du Fouarre), home of the poor scholars of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, where, in accordance with the directions of Urban V., the students had received instruction seated upon bales of straw which littered the street, and where such teachers as Abelard and Albertus Magnus had held forth. Petrarch and Tasso are reported to have been among its visitors, and Jean Buridan, disciple of Occam and propagator of Nominalism, had been another of its lights. But the rue du Fouarre was by no means the only home of talk; theses might be found tacked up in almost any carrefour with wranglers ready

to back them. And the grave subject of dispute may quite likely have been some such a one as the following:

Utrum, omniform Proteus, making a grasshopper of himself and musically exercising his voice on the canicular days, would be able, with one matutinal dew, carefully wrapped up in the month of May, to prepare a third concoction, before the complete course of a zodiacal sling.

Which one old annotator translates as follows: "Whether Proteus, metamorphosed into a singing grasshopper, would be able, with the assistance of a May dew, to prepare three concoctions before the expiration of one whole year." (An enlightening gloss, one must admit.) For *The Philosophical Cream*, which is not Rabelais' but might have been, is not so far a take-off after all.

The students commonly spoke a pig-Latin (*écorche-Latin*) jargon, of which Rabelais' Limousin and his "Latinizings" afford a fair specimen. The principle was to substitute for French words Latin vocables turned into what sounded like a weird and remote sort of French, and yet was neither French nor Latin. Let us hear one of these "Latin-skimmers." Pantagruel, at Orléans, strolling in the vicinity of "the gate by which one leaves for Paris,"—which may have been the same gate by which Rabelais set out for the capital,—encounters a student and inquires of the latter where he is from and "what sort of sport you young gentlemen students find down Paris way." The student replies:

We transfretate the Sequan at the dilucule and the crepuscule; we deambulate through the compites and quadrivies of the urbe; we despumate the Latial verbocination and,

like verisimile amorabonds, captate the benevolence of the omnijugal, omniform and omnigenous feminine sex. . . . Then we cauponisate, in the meritory taverns known as the Pineapple, the Castle, the Madeleine and the Mule, some fine vervecine spatules, perforaminated with petrosil; and if, by fort fortune, there should be a rarity or penury of pecune in our marsupies, and the latter should be exhausted of ferruginous metal, we, for the scot, demit our codices and oppigenerate vestes, prestolating the arrival of tabellaries from the patriotic lares and penates.

Is it any wonder that Pantagruel exclaimed: "What the devil kind of language is this?" Translated, the passage would read:

"We cross the Seine at dawn and twilight; we stroll through the squares and street-corners of the city; we spout (literally, froth or foam) Latin, and, like true lovers, capture the benevolent feminine sex of all shapes, kinds and degrees of servitude (*omnijugal*). . . . Then we eat, in the pay-taverns known as the Pineapple, the Castle, the Madeleine and the Mule, some fine shoulders of mutton, interlarded with parsley; and if, by ill fortune, there should be a scarcity of money in our pocketbooks, then we put our books and clothes in hock, while we wait for messengers from home."

Anyone familiar with Latin will get the general method. It was in the very year, 1529, that Rabelais probably spent in Paris that Geoffroy Tory, in his *Champ Fleury*, launched an attack on these Latinizers. Rabelais, in his Limousin episode (Book Second, Chapter VI.), is undoubtedly satirizing them; but Maître François was himself something of

a Latinizer, especially in his "harangues" (*concions*); he frequently carried his neologisms and his word-coinings to the point of abuse; but we are to remember that, at the time, a distinction was made between terms drawn from the Latin which had no duplication in the French and that jargon which undertook to substitute pedantic terms for those in common use. Rabelais appears to have sensed the necessity of rounding out and enriching the national idiom, and at the same time to have foreseen the danger of incurring too great an indebtedness to the classic tongues, particularly the Latin. The Limousin Student was, in a manner, a forerunner of Ronsard and "his muse, in French, speaking Greek and Latin"; and the *Limousin Epistle*, included among Rabelais' attributed works but not his, even has been seen as a life-like parody of the Pléiade poet. At all events, judging by the appearance of Tory's *Champ Fleury*, the mania must have been at its height at this period, and François must have met with more than one Latin-flayer on the Left Bank.

In the course of his jargonesque monologue, the Limousin at least gives us a list of some of the student hangouts and a hint at some of the student customs of the day. The "meritory taverns" (*tabernæ meritoriæ*) which he mentions were well known ones. The *Pomme de Pin* we know from our reading of Villon. It was situated in the rue de la Juiverie, in the Cité, very near the Madeleine. It was kept, back in the fifteenth century (1457), by one Robin or Robert Turgis of some fame, and was renowned for the quality of its cellar—"*propter bonitatem vini.*" The reputation of the *Castel* also goes back—as far back as the fourteenth century. Its precise location is uncertain, but it may like-

wise have been in the rue de la Juiverie. We do not know where the site of the *Madeleine* was, but we find the tavern *in Mula* mentioned, from 1446 on, as being in the rue Saint-Jacques, near Saint-Mathurin.

The dispatching of "tabellaries" from the "patriotic" (that is, "from father") lares and penates is illuminating. Anxious parents in those days were in the habit of sending money to their student sons by means of sworn messengers.

If Rabelais' Limousin is the type of Latin-flayer, his Panurge, upon the latter's first meeting with his lord and master, Pantagruel, is a composite of that very Babel of tongues in the neighbourhood of the Sorbonne and the rue du Fouarre. Panurge, not content with speaking nine or ten actual languages on an empty stomach, including Scotch and Danish, Basque, Greek and Hebrew, feels called upon to invent a few "Lanternese" dialects of his own. There were at Paris students from every country, and speaking every tongue, under the civilized heavens, and it was upon his polyglot acquaintance that Maître François must have drawn in this episode. Danish and Scotch, for example, he most certainly did not know, though the Scotch at Paris, whether students or soldiery, were famous and infamous for their horrific mispronunciation of French,—the "Mondam, inventor of Sauce-Madame" of Book Fourth, Chapter XL. being, according to Le Duchat, a jibe at the Scotch pronunciation of the French *madame*, while Pasquier, in his *Recherches*, says they pronounced it, not *mondam*, but *moudam*—"St. Treignan, but you're a Scotchman! Or else, I didn't hear you right."

As for the Sorbonne, following the infiltration of Luth-

eranism into France, it had become the great heresy-hunter and, through a confusion of the issues involved, the foe of the nascent Humanism, now quite a hearty infant. It suppressed Erasmus and his translators and frowned on the study of Greek, but the Hellenistic contagion was now spreading in a manner more virulent than ever before; it was in 1529 that Budé's *Commentarii Linguae Graecae*, a monument of French Humanism, appeared. François may have met Budé in Paris, but it does not appear likely. He also may have met Lascaris, who was living there on a royal pension of six-hundred pounds. The latter had been brought back from Italy by Charles VIII., as one of the first and direct fruits of the Italian Expeditions. Then, Francis established his royal readers, an institution out of which the Collège de France was to be born; and writers like Marot were soon casting stones at "the ignorant Sorbonne," stones not unlike those which Mr. Mencken tosses in the direction of our National Academy of Arts and Letters. And François must have witnessed, from close up, all these stirring developments.

III

It was into this atmosphere of intellectual noise and bluster, alongside a very real intellectual activity, that François Rabelais stepped on that day, whenever it was, that he entered Paris for the first time. His tour of the universities of France was now about to be completed by a visit to the capital; and what better place than Paris to top off such an experience, one's wander-years? He probably came from Orléans, by way of that same gate where Panurge and Pantagruel met. And in Paris, we may be sure that he lodged

in that same Hôtel-Saint-Denis where Pantagruel put up.

The Hôtel-Saint-Denis may readily be found on the old maps, the one known as *de la Tapisserie* being the best for the purpose, perhaps. It stood at the corner of the rue Saint-André-des-Arts and the rue des Grands-Augustins, to the left, as one went down to the Seine. The tobacconist's shop at the present No. 54, rue Saint-André-des-Arts, is as accurate a means of locating it as any, since Saint-Denis occupied what is now 54, 56 and 58 of that street, or rather, these numbers correspond to a part of its former site. The hôtel had spacious gardens on the site of the present rue Christine, and touched the Couvent des Grands-Augustins on the north. As has been stated, the opening of the Pont-Neuf did not disturb either Saint-André-des-Arts or the Grands-Augustins.

The Hôtel-Saint-Denis (and the reader is to keep in mind that *hotel* is here employed in the sense of mansion or town-house) had been erected in 1263, under the auspices of Mathieu de Vendôme, Abbot of Saint-Denis. The leading members of the royal abbey had gradually come to make use of it as their Parisian residence, and a school had grown up in connection with it, similar to those of Vendôme, Cluny, des Bernardins, etc. In the fifteenth century, the house had come to be frequented by students of the Order of St. Benedict. When we come down to the seventeenth century (1635), we find it converted into the Maison des Trois-Charités-Saint-Denis, also known as L'Hôtel des Charités-Saint-Denis, near the present No. 23 of the rue des Grands-Augustins.

That Rabelais should have gone to this address was altogether in accordance with the natural order of things. Saint-

Denis was the objective of the Benedictine student in Paris, and Antoine de la Haye (died 1505) had been, at once, Abbot of that institution and of Saint-Pierre de Maillezais. The abbots who succeeded him all came from the West, and probably were acquaintances of D'Estissac.

It must have been while residing in the Hôtel-Saint-Denis that François came into intimate contact with that wholly delectable institution, St. Victor's Library (Book Second, Chapter VII.). For St. Victor's was an Augustinian institution, and the Augustinians were neighbours to the Benedictines. There were, indeed, numerous lawsuits between the two orders; hence something of Maître François' good-natured animus in poking fun at that "magnificent" library, which was "especially rich in books of a certain kind." Rabelais' St. Victor catalogue is something more than a parody of the titles of works of theology and devotion then in vogue; it is an echo of the fray between the Humanists and the Sorbonne, as well as of the quarrel between the German Reuchlin and the theologians of Cologne. Other authors are quite as hard on St. Victor's as was Rabelais (see, for instance, the *Scaligerana*); but Dulaure, in his History of Paris, assures us that there was an improvement of tone the century following. As M. Clouzot points out, Rabelais himself must have visited and made use of this library, while the manuscript-room of the present Bibliothèque Nationale would be decidedly the poorer, if St. Victor's had not been salvaged in part.

François, the short of it is, must have been *à la page* with all that was going on and all that was being talked about in the Paris of his day. However little information we may possess concerning his early stay, and we possess

practically none outside the evidence afforded by his work itself, there is yet enough to make us aware of this. He must, more than once, have sat in at just such a verbal set-to as that embodied in the episode which has for its scene "the great hall of Navarre," where, arguing by means of signs, —and many of them none too respectable,—Panurge puts the Englishman's back to the wall. These scholastic disputations, being greatly overdone, had long since become a subject for popular satire; in this, Rabelais is not original. There was the debate between the scholar and the carpenter at Geneva, which Le Motteux relates having heard of; but it is more likely that Rabelais is here borrowing his incident directly from a gloss of that same legal annotator, Accursius, whom he elsewhere so belabours. The episode is not a freak of the imagination, but one very close to life.

François must, too, have listened to the gossip about the College of Montaigu, which would account for Ponocrates' bitterness:

I would rather enroll him among the beggars of St. Innocent's (sic), *when I think of the enormous cruelty and vile treatment which I know is to be found in that institution; for convicts among the Moors and Tartars, murderers in criminal prison—even, I might say, the very dogs in your house—are better off than are the poor devils in that college. And if I were King of Paris, may the Devil take me, if I wouldn't set fire to the whole place and burn up principal and regents, who stand for such inhumanity being practised in front of their very eyes.*

François knew all the stories and ghost-stories of the town, including the one about the Devil of Vauvert. On the

present site of the Observatoire, there stood the hôtel de Vauvert, a structure which legend attributed to Robert le Pieux. It had been abandoned during the reign of St. Louis, at which time it served as a refuge for bands of vagrants. St. Louis, in 1257, made a present of it to the Carthusians, whereupon the ghost is reported promptly to have disappeared, only the street name, *Enfer*, remaining to commemorate its erstwhile presence. The revenant, opines the erudite Le Duchat, was likely the wind; but anyway, it made a good story, and one of many which Rabelais picked up and used in his work, as the fancy took him.

Among other places which we find mentioned in the Rabelaisian opus is the Hôtel de Cluny, where Thaumast (Sir Thomas More?) finds a lodging on that famously thirsty night before the great debate. It is quite natural that a Britisher should have gone to the Hôtel de Cluny, for it was a favourite resort of the visiting Englishman of note. Mary of England had taken refuge there after the death of Louis XII., and James V. of Scotland had there been married to Madeleine of France, daughter of Francis I. All this fidelity of detail, it may be noted, indicates the familiarity of the acclimated. Among the abbeys which Rabelais mentions are those of Sainte-Geneviève, Saint-Antoine on the Right Bank, and Saint-Victor on the Left. Saint-Antoine is referred to as the objective of a stroll, Saint-Victor, of course, for its library. For the churches of Paris, see the chapter (Chapter XVII., Book Second) bearing the title: "How Panurge Got the Pardons and Married Off the Old Women." There is Saint-Gervais, which stood in the *place* of the same name; there is Notre-Dame, the metropolitan church; there is Saint-Jean, and there is Saint-

Antoine. As to Saint-Jean, there were two churches of this name: one, Saint-Jean-le-Rond, situated in the cloister of Notre-Dame (demolished in 1748); the other, Saint-Jean-en-Grève, in the rue du Martroi, which was, without doubt, the one that enjoyed the honour of Panurge's visit (Saint-Jean-en-Grève disappeared at the beginning of the Revolution, to provide room for enlarging the Hôtel de Ville.)

One of the points of interest which particularly struck Rabelais' fancy, and his sense of humour, as well, was the cemetery *des Innocents*, on the Right Bank. See, in the text immediately preceding the St. Victor catalogue, the description of how the cemetery beggars contrived to keep warm. This, as the archivists point out, may have been almost literally true. The *Innocents* was situated near Les Halles, being bounded by the present rue de la Lingerie, rue de la Ferronnerie and the rue des Innocents. Inhabited by mendicants and miscreants, it was one of the oldest burying-places in the city. Conditions in it were terrible, and it had become a constant source of infection. Inasmuch as the burying-ground was too small to accommodate its population of the dead, not to mention the living, the bones of many of the former had been deposited in galleries, which, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, were used by the Parisians as a promenade. There were even shops, bookstores, etc., along this gruesome walk, which Villon alludes to in one of his ballads. So that Rabelais' description, after all, was scarcely an exaggeration.

The Seine and its bridges caught his eye, as whose do they not snare? There is the Petit-Pont, where "Fresh country chicken" (*Sur Petit-Pont geline de feurre*) was the cry;

the Pont-aux-Meuniers, down below the Pont-au-Change, so named from the mills which had been set up under its arches (it disappeared in the seventeenth century); there are the Pont-au-Change and others. He must have wandered as far as Montmartre, since he once heard Gargantua, "calling Eudemon, all the way from the Porte Saint-Victor to Montmartre." The little village of Montmartre was barely a couple of thousand paces from the walls of Paris. Perched upon a vine-clad hill, it numbered only 100 inhabitants at the beginning of the eighteenth century; so that its population in François' time must have been considerably less. The summit of the butte was occupied by a monastery of women of the Order of St. Benedict, by the ancient church of Saint-Pierre and by the Chapel of St. Denis, Martyr, where, less than half a dozen years later,—on Assumption Day, 1534,—Ignatius Loyola was to receive the vows of his first nine companions, and the Society of Jesus was to be born. (Rabelais has a possible nasty reference to Loyola, in the St. Victor catalogue: "The Sweaty Smell of Spaniards, Supercockilicanticated by Fra Inigo." In case it is Loyola that he means here, Maître François is the first writer to speak of either Ignatius or his order. Loyola was in Paris at this time—he had arrived there in February, 1528—but he was as yet little known outside the College of Montaigu. However, his early spiritual exercises may have attracted the annoyed attention of the author of the *Pantagruel*.)

Rabelais knew not merely Paris, but its environs. In that chapter (Chapter XXIV. of the *Gargantua*) which tells how the young giant spent his time in rainy weather, he lists

a number of well known suburbs: Saint-Cloud, the present Sunday paradise of the Parisian bourgeois; Gentilly; Boulogne; Mont-Rouge; Pont-de-Charenton; and Vanves.

But what was François doing all this time? The answer is: he probably was beginning, or carrying on, his medical studies; the reason for this answer will become clear shortly. If he was studying medicine, and living at the Benedictine Hôtel de Saint-Denis, it must have been with the knowledge of his immediate churchly superiors, even though without formal ecclesiastical approbation—that was to come later. In the Prayer for Absolution from Apostasy (*Pro Apostasia*) which, in 1535, Rabelais addressed to Pope Paul III., it is stated that he had laid aside his monastic frock without permission of his superiors, and that he had donned and gone about in the garb of a secular while carrying on his medical studies, sometimes still serving mass and officiating at the altar.

Our Maître's feet were now dusty ones, of a truth. If he had not travelled far on horseback, he had voyaged widely in his mind; and within the compass of his own France, he had seen what there was to see and heard many things that are not spoken. Always something of a roamer by temperament, his first wander-years were now at an end, for the reason that he now knew what he wanted to do: he wanted to become a physician.

CHAPTER NINE

THE THERAPEUTICS OF A LAUGH

Above all, the aforementioned authors have had special advice to give the physician concerning the words, remarks, discourse and conversation which should take place between him and the patients by whom he is summoned, the object being that all should tend to one end, namely, the cheering of the patient (without any offence to God) and the avoidance of anything that may, in the least, serve to make him sad.

Dedicatory Epistle to Book Fourth

I

THE mind of François Rabelais was the product, essentially, of three disciplines: theology, law and medicine. Running through all these is the influence of classical antiquity. We might say, then, his culture was fourfold: ecclesiastic (Scholastic), juridical, medical and Humanistic. We have seen him, as a member of "the first class of little rowdies" (*petitz grimaulx:* Gargantua's word), being reared on Donatus' Latin grammar and the highly moral distichs of the pseudo-Cato. We know that, in preparation for his priestly calling, he must have had a grounding in Scotus and the other lights of Franciscanism. In André Tira-

queau's garden, he had formed an intimate acquaintance with the legal profession, while in the course of his academic wanderings, he had met other legists, no doubt had attended lectures on law, and seems to have vacillated, in his choice of a profession, between the law and medicine. His choice is now made; there is no longer any wavering; he likely has been studying medicine for some little time, but he is now to enroll definitely as a candidate for the doctor's hood. And whether he knew it or not, this third and novel discipline was to prove a vast determining influence in his thinking, shaping, in a final and definitive manner, his view of the world and of "that other world which is man."

With the beginning of his medical career, the shadows begin to lift a little from François' life, and we find ourselves in possession of certain documents. None too many, it is true; but pieced out with fairly trustworthy tradition, they serve to give us the picture. At Montpellier, down to the early part of the eighteenth century, they still employed —until it was worn into shreds—Maître François' doctoral gown for the investiture of candidates. Astruc, at least, in his university *Mémoires*, assigns the garment to Rabelais. This gown, a red one with a hood and flowing sleeves, was repaired in 1612, by François Ranchin, the official faculty painter; and from the Latin of the records, an amusing notation is to be deciphered, to the effect that Ranchin, a candidate for chancellor, will agree to repair the relic, on condition that he is accorded his fellow faculty-members' votes. By 1720, however, the custom which each doctoral candidate had of snipping away a portion of the gown as a

souvenir had proved too much, and a new one had to be provided.

The portrait of Rabelais, which may still be viewed at Montpellier, is probably the work of Ranchin, who was in the habit of doing the members of the faculty; but its authenticity is gravely to be doubted, inasmuch as most of these portraits were either purely imaginative or mere copies of earlier ones.

Much of our knowledge of this period of François' life is due to the earnest and scholarly excavations, in the university records, of two mid-nineteenth-century members of the Montpellier faculty. M. A. Germain (1871) made a documentary study of the Renaissance in his city, and M. Richard Gordon (1876) gave us the facsimile autographs having to do with our subject. The sources of our information at this point are:

1) The matriculation Register of the university, from February, 1502 to May 10, 1561.

2) The Registre des Actes of the university, from October, 1523, to April 20, 1559.

3) The Liber Procuratoris Studiosorum, from March 26, 1526, to December 15, 1535.

4) The lecture or classroom records.

In addition to these, there is another Rabelais document of some interest, and that is a copy of the *Petri Bembi Opuscula*, or Works of Pietro Bembo, bearing Maître François' usual ex-libris autograph, the *kai ton autou philon.*

Thus documentarily fortified, let us see what sort of picture we may be able to evolve of François' medic days.

II

There is no record as to what kind of weather they were having at Montpellier, when, on the 17th. day of September, 1530, François Rabelais strode into the office of the Procurator Studiosorum and, as the American college-boy would describe it, "plunked down" a gold crown as his matriculation-fee. But one likes to think that, for so important a turning-point as this, it was one of those elastic autumn days, with, despite the spring under foot, a certain quivering, wavering tenseness in the air, like that of a leaf that is undecided whether to fall or not—such a day, in short, as every born student knows and loves and looks forward to—the dog-days behind, and a sudden revivified ache to get at those books once more. François, let us remember, was a student; he was bookish but not, I believe, book-wormish; and after all, it *was* a turning-point: he must have known, as he stood there in his unauthorized secular garb and swore to observe the rules and regulations of the institution, that he was doing something in the nature of burning his bridges, that he was taking a by no means unimportant step forward and leaving much behind.

The prescribed oath which François took upon matriculating at Montpellier is couched in academic Latin; and for the sake of the record, as attorneys say, and in order to facilitate comparison with the facsimile reproduced herewith, it is given first in the original:

Ego Franciscus Rabelaesus Chinonensis, diocesis Turonensis, huc adpuli studiorum medicinae gratia. Delegique mihi in patrem egregium Dominum Joannem Scurronem, doc-

torem regentemque in hac alma universitate. Polliceor autem me omnia observaturum quae in predicta medicinae facultate statuuntur et observari solent ab iis qui nomen bona fide dedere, juramento, ut moris est praestito. Adscripsique nomen meum manu propria, die decima septima mensis septembris, anno domini millesimo quingentesimo trigesimo.

RABELAESUS

The Latin almost reads itself, but for the benefit of those who may be out of practice:

I, François Rabelais of Chinon, of the Diocese of Tours, hereby enroll in the medical course. I have, further, selected as my faculty adviser (patrem) *the eminent Jean Schyron, doctor and regent of this university. I promise, in addition, that I will observe all those rules which are prescribed by the said faculty of medicine, and which are customarily observed by those who have sworn so to do, in good faith and upon their oaths, as is required. And I have hereunto set my name, in my own hand, on this seventeenth day of September, in the year of Our Lord fifteen-hundred-thirty.*

RABELAIS

And in the records of Guillaume Rondellet, Procurator, there is a notation of the payment of fee:

Franciscus Rabelaesus, diocesis Turonensis, solvit, die 17 septembris 1530, unum aureum.

Having forked over his "*unum aureum*" and stalked out of the registrar's office, François, like most university newcomers, may have had a moment or so for lonesome reflection, before being gulfed into the usual round—usual then as now—of student activities, both inside and outside the

classroom. He had not, we may be certain, arrived altogether unknown and unvouched for. That, throughout life, was not his way; wherever he went, he generally contrived to have sponsors of some weight, both behind and ahead of him. In the present case, his point of contact would seem to have been Schyron (or Esquiron, as M. Clouzot has it), whose acquaintance François probably had made at Scaliger's lectures in Agen, back in the Bordeaux country; and it was, no doubt, for this reason that Schyron came to be chosen as the new matriculant's "*pater.*" One friend on the faculty, however, does not insure a new student against ennui. That initial loneliness does not usually last long; it commonly vanishes with the first hail from a fellow freshman; but it sometimes lasts long enough to afford opportunity for a bit of thinking, assuming that the youth in question is capable of the act.

François' thoughts may have turned at this time to certain relations between his future and his past. He was now a full-fledged Humanist, no longer by early groping choice, but by virtue of his acceptance as such by the leading Humanists of France. So much was settled; there was no thought or question of a possible turning back. He was a man of the future, in that he had willed to be a man of the past; the "man of the future" at any one moment is the fashionably advanced thinker, and the Humanistic throwback was the vogue in 1530. How, then, did his new bent, medicine, hook up with his Humanism? It hooked up very well, indeed. Medicine—which meant Greek medicine: Hippocrates and Galen—was a Humanist fad. Budé, Tiraqueau and numerous others, including Rabelais' friend, Hubert Sussannée, had dabbled in it; and Tiraqueau, as we see from

the dedication of the work, had suggested François' translating the letters of Manardi, the Humanist physician of Ferrara. Medicine was looked upon by the men of the New Learning as a branch of "philosophy," a lady whose domain was vast and vague; it was associated, on the one hand, with the physics of Aristotle and, on the other, with the natural history of Pliny, Theophrastus, etc. Did something of all this shoot through the new arrival's mind? Did he think of his background and his foreground, and of how the former might be made to advance the latter? He was, I believe, intellectually ambitious; and an ambitious young fellow (François was no longer quite so young), dropped down in the midst of a new university environment, is apt to do some hard and fast thinking, the general trend of his thoughts being how to get out of the crowd, how to distinguish himself. And François saw a way. If he did not sight it at this moment which we are picturing, he was not long in doing so.

At Montpellier, where the curriculum would appear to have been about half-and-half divided between Greek medicine and the brand taught by the old Arab physicians such as Averroes and Avicenna, the Greek medical writers were studied, that is, were lectured upon, not in their native language, but in Latin translations. This gave François his chance and his cue. Textual criticism was, if not the backbone, certainly a pivotal vertebra of the New Learning; one might almost say that it had been the genetic principle of the latter; and Rabelais knew enough, already, about Galen and Hippocrates to beware that their texts had, frequently, been garbled and their teachings, as a consequence, misinterpreted; he is to state as much, in so many words,

a short while later, in the dedication of his edition of these authors, addressed to his old friend and patron, Geoffroy d'Estissac. He would, accordingly, try the experiment, a sufficiently startling one, as it was to prove, of discarding the translations and of going back and basing his own lectures directly upon the Greek. He was aware, too, that even in connection with his beloved Greeks, there was a trifle too much of false worship upon occasion, a tendency to take, once one was converted to Greek medicine, anything that Hippocrates or Galen might say as the gospel truth,—even in a case where that "*gentil falot Galen*" had made rather a ninny of himself by asserting that the head was created for the sake of the eyes. He would reverse all that, when it came to his *petit ordinaire*, that springtime course of lectures, running from Low Sunday to the Feast of St. John, when the teaching doctors abandoned their rostrums in order that the newly created bachelors might have opportunity to show how much, or how little, of medical science they knew. He would show them—

Or possibly, his thoughts were less ambitious; possibly his attitude held more of humility, more of a freshman's awe for that great and cherishing mother whom he had just adopted. It may be that he was thinking of the history of his *alma universitas*, which, founded in the early years of the thirteenth century, had grown up to a continent-wide reputation. We have heard Pantagruel's opinion of its law faculty, but its medical faculty was a flourishing one, the allied natural sciences, such as botany and anatomy, being taught in an especially thorough and practical manner—anatomy, for example, by means of the human skeleton, and, in addition, by dissections, when the hospital or the gallows

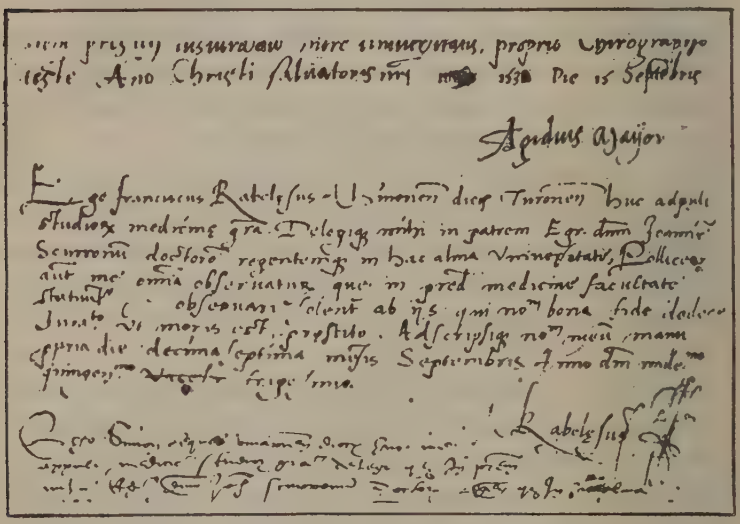
yielded the necessary subjects. Dissections in those days were rare enough to become a matter of record, and we know that one took place in 1530, the year of Rabelais' arrival, while there were two the following year, and three the year after. This was enough to cause any young medic's bosom to puff with pride.

But François' meditations were probably interrupted, at this point or sooner, by an invitation to something other than study. For despite the hard-working atmosphere of the place, there were other things than study—a number of other things—at Montpellier. Banquets, for one thing. If tennis and dancing were in favour at other universities, the favourite sport at Montpellier would seem to have been eating; and it was here, perhaps, that François derived his appreciation of the art, to the extent of assuring us, in the Prologue to his *Gargantua*, that

. . . in the composition of this lordly tome, I did not waste nor spend any more time than that allotted to my bodily refection, by which I would have you understand: eating and drinking. Such, indeed, is the proper time to treat of these high matters and profound sciences, as Homer, paragon of all philologists, well knew, and Ennius, father of the Latin poets, as Horace bears witness, even though one lout has said that Horace's verses smell more of wine than they do of oil.

There were banquets upon the arrival of a new student or professor and banquets upon the departure of an old one; there was a banquet for the fête des Rois and one for the reception of a new bachelor, etc. It was at this time that

François encountered the "very good wines of Mirevaux," and he also found plenty of "cheerful company." (See the *Pantagruel*, Chapter V.) There is a record of one "*Maister Franciscus*," who must be none other than our own Maître François, among the guests at a banquet which was held on the 15th. of October, 1530, or less than a month after his



"The Overflowing Fount of Healing Lore"
(*Autograph Oath and Signature of Rabelais upon Matriculating in Medicine at Montpellier, on the 16th. of September, 1530*)

arrival, and there is a similar record for the 9th. of October, 1531.

Meanwhile, François must have been working hard, for on November 1, barely six weeks after his arrival, we find him becoming a bachelor of medicine. Here, the distinction between the French degrees of bachelor, licentiate and doctor are to be kept in mind. Nevertheless, this was rather

amazingly rapid advancement, and one only to be accounted for by assuming that he had been studying for some time. There is record of the payment, on December 1, of another gold crown as François' baccalaureate fee, and this tends to indicate that the November 1 entry is in error; but even at that, the newcomer's progress had been swift enough. The entry in the *Liber Procuratoris* runs:

Franciscus Rabelaesus baccalaureus, die prima decembris 1530, persolvit aureum unum.

In order to begin the academic study of medicine, Rabelais must have had a training equivalent to that of the bachelor of arts or science of today, a thorough grounding in logic and philosophy being a prerequisite. Three years of study ordinarily were required for admission to the baccalaureate. As a bachelor of medicine, François' troubles were only beginning. Before obtaining his licentiate, it was necessary for him to give a course of public lectures over a period of three months. Oral examinations and the sustaining of theses were also a part of the routine. To obtain his licentiate, the bachelor had to undergo four tests *per intentionem*—that is, *per intentionem adipiscendi licentiam*, with the object of obtaining his license. These tests were four hours long, lasting from eight in the morning until noon. The doctoral candidate had to sustain four successive theses on subjects given the night before, each disputation lasting at least an hour; and after eight days, there were two more theses—the "*points rigoureux*"—the first having to do with some specific disease, the second with an aphorism of Hippocrates, the disease and the aphorism each being

selected by lot, from a book held in one case by the chancellor and in the other by the dean. These disputations likewise lasted four hours, or from noon until 4 P. M. As for the colourful ceremonies accompanying the conferring of the doctorate, we shall hear more of those later, in Rabelais' own case.

François chose as the subject of his *petit ordinaire*, or required course of spring lectures, the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates and the *Ars Parva* of Galen. His course lasted from April 17, 1531, to June 24 of the same year. According to his own report, in his D'Estissac dedication, he had "a numerous auditory." For François did exactly what we have pictured him as dreaming of doing: he based his lectures upon the Greek originals. Strange as it may seem to us, this alone was enough to attract a crowd at the time; and the very choice of subject was in itself no little of a novelty. The Arabic school was still strongly intrenched at Montpellier, and by selecting Hippocrates and Galen as his subjects, Rabelais was, in a way, issuing a manifesto. The battle against the Arabs—those "wrangling, addle-pated, block-head physicians," as Maître François was later to refer to them—was barely beginning, and Rabelais was one of the leaders of the van. It is significant that none dared follow the latter's example by lecturing upon the Greek originals until the year 1537, when Dr. Rabelais repeated his performance by discoursing upon the *Prognostics*. Another element of Rabelais' doctrine was the necessity of the physician's constantly checking his book-learning with experience —with common sense, in other words; and this was also revolutionary.

III

One of the experiences, an experience aside from study, of his medic days is described by Rabelais himself in Chapter XXXIV. of his Third Book. The occasion was one of those dramatic performances which were then so popular all over France, and which, along with feastings, constituted a popular student diversion at Montpellier. Dr. Rondibilis has just been setting forth his opinions on the frailer sex, and has just provided Panurge with a remedy for a certain common complaint on the part of husbands, when Ponocrates, historic tutor of the Rabelaisian opus, speaks up:

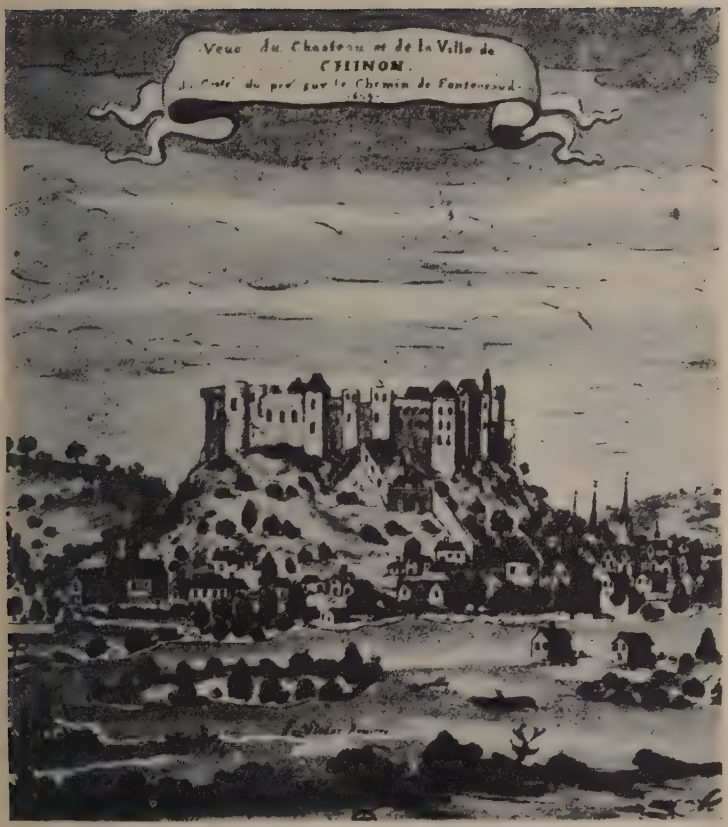
"*My good sir, you are a very welcome guest, indeed. I have taken, praise God, a very great pleasure in listening to you. I do not recall having seen you since you were playing at Montpellier, along with our old friends, Anthony Saporta, Guy Bouguier, Balthazar Noyer, Tollet, Jean Quentin, François Robinet, Jean Perdrier and François Rabelais, in the moral comedy of 'The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife.'*"

"*I was there,*" *said Epistemon.* "*The good man wanted her to talk. She talked, thanks to the art of the physician and surgeon, who cut an ancyloglot which she had under her tongue. When she had recovered her speech, she proceeded to talk so much that the husband returned to the physician for a remedy to make her keep silent. The physician replied that he knew many remedies to make women talk, but that he had none to make them keep still, the only one he knew of being to render the husband deaf, as a protection against his wife's interminable babbling.*

"And so, the old lecher became deaf, through some charm or other; whereupon his wife, perceiving that he was deaf, and that she was talking in vain, since he could not hear her, went mad. Then, the physician came to ask for his fee. The husband replied that he was deaf and could not hear what the physician was saying. The physician then threw some sort of powder or other on the husband's back, by virtue of which the latter became a fool. Following which, the fool of a husband and the crazy wife banded together and proceeded to beat the physician and surgeon, leaving him half dead. I never laughed so much in my life as I did over that fool clowning."

Here, we have a veritable slice of autobiography, about as nearly personal as anything we shall ever get from Rabelais. Here is a vivid and rollicking schoolday memory vividly recorded. It is the old grad looking back on the class play or the undergraduate comic opera. Rabelais, it is to be noticed, lists himself personally, and he also gives us the names of a number of his associates at Montpellier. Saporta we know to have been professor of medicine and chancellor of the university—rather a dignified personage, one would say, to have been playing in the "Dumb Wife." Not to mention the fact that he was physician to the King, and to the Queen of Navarre. Tollet (or Tolet) we find mentioned in the *De Nobilitate* of Tiraqueau as being one of the contemporary lights of medicine. A number of the other names will be found on the *Registre des Actes* of the university.

"The Dumb Wife" has since become historic, being known to the English reader through Anatole France's ver-



"A Little Town of Great Renown"

(View of Chinon in the Seventeenth Century. From a Print in the Bibliothèque Nationale)

sion. It has been believed that Rabelais himself may have been the author of the original, and that he derived his inspiration from the old French farce of *Pathelin.*

It is here that we make the acquaintance of Rabelais, the Laugher, the one who composed the following decastich to go at the front of his *Gargantua:*

My friends, who are about to read this book,
Please rid yourselves of every predilection;
You'll find no scandal, if you do not look,
For it contains no evil or infection.
True, you'll discover, upon close inspection,
It teaches little except how to laugh:
The best of arguments; the rest is chaff,
Viewing the grief that threatens your brief span;
For smiles, not tears, make the better autograph,
Because to laugh is natural to man.

This is the father and founder of "Pantagruelism," who knows with Aristotle that "Man is the only animal that laughs." (Cf. Dante's "*essere risibile.*") It is of interest, in passing, to contrast this outlook, that of a healthy animality, with Baudelaire's "satanic" view of laughter, set forth in the latter writer's essay *De l'Essence du Rire* (*Curiosités Esthétiques*). Rabelais, need it be said? would have been miles from comprehending the Baudelairean "*Le Sage ne rit qu'en tremblant.*" François was a physician, and, moreover, a physician of an optimistic school, who believed that nature is right, and that the thing to do is to obey and follow her. There were two worlds, the one larger, the other smaller, but both, in a manner of speaking, the best

of possible worlds; and whether or not God was in his heaven, the hands of the morning clock always pointed at the hour to laugh. Something has been said—much has been said—of Rabelais' "naturalism." That "naturalism" was in large part to grow out of his medical pursuits, and in it laughter was an essential, guiding and symbolic factor. There was considerable discussion, in François' day, regarding "the moral basis of laughter," and at least one or two curious treatises were written on the subject. It had come to take on, therefore, something of a philosophic import in Maître François' mind, a view which will be found reflected in his writings: as the wine was a Humanistic, so laughter became a naturalistic symbol.

This will account for the stress, at first sight a jocular one, which Rabelais throughout lays upon the therapeutic virtues of his Chronicles—the Precious and the Gouty ones to whom he dedicates those Chronicles:

There are certain others (and this is no joshing) who, when they were suffering intensely from toothache, after having spent all they had on doctors without getting any relief, have been able to find no more effective remedy than that of placing those Chronicles *between two very hot cloths and applying them to the sore spot, sinapizing them with a little* pouldre d'oribus. . . .

. . . *And what did they do then? All the consolation they had was to listen to the reading of a few pages of that same* Book; *and we have seen some who will give themselves to a hundred great barrelfuls of old devils, if they did not feel an obvious relief from the reading of that* Book *while they were being held in the limboes.*

And speaking, in the Old Prologue to Book Fourth, of those who had suppressed his work:

They have snatched them away from the sick, the gouty, the unfortunate, for whom, in their sufferings, I had originally composed these books. For if I could take under my personal care all who are sick and ailing, there would be no need of publishing such works as mine.

Hippocrates has written a book on this very subject, a book which he entitles The Calling of the Perfect Physician; and Galen has illuminated it with learned commentaries, in the course of which he asserts that there must be nothing about the physician, even to his fingernails, which may give offence to the patient, but that, on the other hand, everything about the doctor—his face, his gestures, his clothing, his conversation, the glance of his eye, his touch—must be calculated to please and soothe the sick one. And that is just what I am engaged in doing, to the best of my ability, in my own field, and in my own plain-spoken way; such is the attitude I always assume toward those whom I have undertaken to treat, and that is what my professoinal brethren do. . . .

But there is more to come. In a certain passage of the sixth book of the Epidemics *of that same Father Hippocrates, the thing which we find ourselves all in a sweat about is not the establishing of the fact that a peevish, grouchy, crabby, unpleasant and ill-humoured face on the part of a physician tends to give his patients the blues, whereas a jovial, serene, pleasant, smiling and open countenance cheers the patient,—no, all that has been proved, and is a fact—but the point that concerns us is that the dumps*

on the part of the patient, or the cheering of the patient, are due to a certain susceptibility on his side, as he views in his doctor the very qualities which he imbibes. . . .

Since, then, it is not possible for me to be called in by all the sick, or to take all patients under my care, how great a piece of spite-work it is to want to deprive the ill and languishing ones of whatever amusement they may, without offence to God, the King, or any other, be able to find in listening to those merry books of mine, when those books are read to them in my absence.

The same thought is repeated, in almost the same words, in the Dedicatory Epistle to Monseigneur Odet (Book Fourth), with an expansion in the form of anecdotes illustrative of the point in hand. Rabelais insists so strenuously upon his mission of bringing comfort to the sick and ailing that one almost comes to believe him. He is jesting, it may be, but he is only jesting in part. In the back of his mind is that "moral basis of laughter" and the teaching of his school.

Once more, we have a traditional picture somewhat defaced by facts, and by a little searching around the facts. Rabelais the Humourist, in whom, according to our Pantagruelizing friends with the overshoes and the green umbrellas, it is a crime to see anything other than a humourist, is now seen to be a Humourist with a Purpose—he is even, one might say, a Constructive Humourist. Certainly, the old portrait of a guffawing vulgarian at the tavern table must go; there is no longer any room for it.

All this is, it must be admitted, correcting a false stress by a slight overemphasis in the other and right direction.

Maître François was hardly so cut-and-dried about the thing as all that. He had a very real sense of humour, even though a weird, Gargantuan, Gulliver-like variety, and one that can be as lumbering at times as those giants whose "dreadful feats of prowess" it celebrates. He had, in particular, a genius for the rough, broad stroke, and a feeling for horse-play which occasionally almost rises to the sublime. His is, in brief, very much the sort of humour one would expect of a doctor, of a medical man with the background of a naturalistic philosophy. In his biography up to now, we have heard something of his conversation and the charming company he made, but nothing of his humour. As we have seen, he probably had a good time, of a sort and while it lasted, with the Franciscans of Fontenay-le-Comte, before he became embroiled with the brothers over the question of his Greek books. His conversion to Humanism was, it is likely, as serious an affair with him as a conversion to Method- or any other -ism; at any rate, he appears to have taken life with a considerable degree of seriousness thereafter. Laughter may have echoed from under those laurels of Tiraqueau's, but the jurist himself and Bouchet of the wife-and-eight were, as we happen to know, a good deal more interested in an encyclopædic erudition than they were in merry quips and jesting tales, even those of *haulte gresse*. As for D'Estissac, like many another priest and bishop, he may have relished a little sacerdotal fun upon occasion; but it is not until François arrives at Montpellier that we have a definite record of him as a fun-maker, while it is from this epoch that he starts to branch out as an Apostle of Humour.

IV

The "Dumb Wife" performance, if we follow M. Clouzot's chronology, must have taken place some time during the months from May to September, 1531. On October 23 (there is some doubt as to the date), we find François signing a statement of account presented by the university. And then, from November, 1531, to May, 1532, he drops out of sight completely. This is another of the biographic dark spots. M. Clouzot believes he may have gone back to Poitou, this conjecture being based upon the fact that his first works, published at Lyons in 1532, are all dedicated to citizens of Poitou. Prof. Lefranc thinks it not impossible that Rabelais, during these months, paid a second visit to Paris, which would account for the freshness and vividness of the Parisian impressions in the *Pantagruel*, which appeared in the fall of 1532. The present biographer, in a preceding chapter, has called attention to certain incidents of Pantagruel's university tour, such as the burning of Jean de Caturce at Toulouse (1532) and the plague at Angers (1530–32), which, if the passage is to be taken as representative of François' two years of wandering (1528–1530), are out of chronological order; yet these incidents are alluded to with a certain air of first-hand experience on Maître François' part. Was he, possibly, at Toulouse and Angers, among other places, in the course of these mysterious six or seven months?

The next news we have, in June, 1532, François is at Lyons, intellectually the second capital of France, and is already launched upon yet another career, an even more arduous and harder-going one than that of medicine: the life of a literary man.

CHAPTER TEN

BLACK TEETH BY THE MILLION

En mille maisons, au dedans,
Un grand million de dents noires,
Un million de noires dents,
Travaille en foires et hors foires.

ODE DE L'ANTIQUITÉ ET EXCELLENCE DE LA VILLE DE LYON

I

IT may seem a trifle strange at first that François, who was still supposed to be wearing, but who as a matter of fact was not wearing, the habit of a Bendictine monk, and who was now a matriculated student of medicine at the University of Montpellier, should suddenly (as it seems) have run away to Lyons to embark upon a period of feverish literary activity. Yet that was what happened, and there was a reason. The reason was, doubtless, a very simple one, and one by no means unheard of in the past: a student's need of money. Do we not, in our own time, have students in college and professional school "working their way through," and even dropping out for an earning interval? There was another reason, and that was the rapid growth of the printing industry and the need of the printers for copy.

Lyons, in reality the second city of the realm, ran Paris a close second as the intellectual capital; and in one respect, at least, in its greater distance from the meddling dictation and the intimidations of the Sorbonne, it had the advantage over Paris. It was the centre of a thriving printing and book-selling industry and, like Tübingen in Germany, was the home of learned publications. The "black teeth"—by which is meant, of course, the printers' type—were working, if not literally in a "thousand houses," certainly in a goodly number, "both in and out of fair-time." There naturally came to be a Lyons "group," and a distinguished group it was, including Dolet, Marot, Desperiers, Symphorien Champier, Maurice Svève, Charles Fontaine, Barthélemy Aneau, Salmon Macrin and Rabelais' friend, Hubert Sussannée. The Lyons bookmen were in the habit of calling upon the learned from all over the kingdom; and Maître François' reputation was by this time a growing one. The Humanists and literary men were pressed into service as editors and revisers, and even as proof-readers. There is a tradition to the effect that Rabelais, like Étienne Dolet, had served in the last mentioned capacity. Another task to which these young fellows—young in the sense in which "*les jeunes*" are always young—were put, upon occasion, was the revamping of the old romances of chivalry, works of this sort, including the old poets, the old French *facéties* and chansons, and other embodiments of *l'esprit gaulois*, being turned out at Lyons in something like quantity production.

It is not so strange, therefore, if François, suffering from a complaint which the art of Galen could not touch,

Lack of money, there's no affliction like it,

should have turned to Lyons as to a source of revenue. As has been said, his Humanistic reputation probably helped him and had preceded him, and he may have been urged to go to Lyons by his friends, who may have provided him with introductions. And so, after dropping out of sight at Montpellier in November, 1531,—dropping out of sight, that is, so far as the biographic record is concerned,—he turns up again at Lyons in the spring of the following year, and under date of June 3, 1532, we find him dedicating the *Medical Letters* of Manardi to his jurist friend, André Tiraqueau.

We do not know whether Rabelais followed Dolet's example by becoming a proof-reader, or whether, like others, he may have turned a hand to some of the old romances. It has been stated, though authority for the statement appears to be lacking, that he revised the romance of *Pierre de Provence*, a task on which Petrarch likewise is reported to have laboured. One thing we are certain of is that the tremendous selling-success of these old tales caught his eye and gave the shaping impetus to his literary career. His own *Pantagruel* (published at the end of this year) goes back, as we shall see, for its inspiration to the mediæval mystery plays, while the Gargantuan Chronicle (*Les Grandes et Inestimables Cronicques*), published at Lyons in August, 1532, served him as inspiration and source-book for his *Gargantua*. But whatever his first anonymous service, François made his debut as an editor and prefacer of medical texts.

Something has been said of the Humanist interest in

medicine, and it seems to have been André Tiraqueau who drew Rabelais' attention to the writings of the physician of Ferrara. In his *De Legibus*, the legist of Fontenay had devoted a eulogistic passage to Manardi, whose first book of Letters had appeared in 1525. When, now, a second "volume," in reality a second collection, of Letters from the same hand came out, Rabelais lost no time in seeing that the book had a reprinting at Lyons, and wrote for it a Dedication addressed to Tiraqueau. The Lyons volume was an octavo of 589 pages plus 16 unnumbered ones. It bore the title: IO. MANARDI FERRARIENSIS MEDICI *Epistolarum Medicinalium Tomus Secundus, Nunquam in Gallia Excusus;* and the printer's mark was: *Lugduni apud Seb. Gryphium MDXXXII.*

In his Dedication, Maître Francois enters upon a favourite theme of the physician always: the ignorance of the mob as displayed in the unquestioning worship bestowed upon the quack and the charlatan, the imposing but unqualified practitioner. But he is rather pessimistic about the possibilities of enlightening the crowd:

For if you deprive those whom the ignorant mob looks upon as being of a certain rank, on account of a certain borrowed and specious cleverness which they affect,—if you deprive these individuals of that mask and that lion's skin of theirs, until you succeed in bringing the mob to appreciate the fact that the art which has raised them to so brilliant a position is no more than a lot of juggleries, pure and simple, and the most stupid of stupidities,—if you succeed in doing this, shall you thereby have done anything except to claw out the eyes of crows?

. . . It is very nearly the same with these friends of ours. They can well enough see the lightboat of lies battered and leaking in every part; yet, they insist upon retaining, by force and by violence, those works to which they have been accustomed from their youth up. If one endeavours to snatch these away from them, they feel that he is, at the same time, snatching away their very souls.

. . . there are always those from whose hands one cannot take the Barbarians' superannuated glosses.

There is, nevertheless, a ray of hope:

There is one redeeming circumstance, and that is the fact that, among nearly all classes, the people have begun to feel that certain of their physicians, or certain of those who pass as physicians, would be found, if given a thorough examination, to be void of science, of good faith, of prudence, and to be full of arrogance, of envy and of ordures of all sorts. These fellows get their experience by killing folks (as Pliny once complained); and they are a source of greater danger, even, than any that comes from disease itself.

But now, at last, those who have avowed their fealty to an ancient and purified form of medicine are beginning to follow in the footsteps of the great. If this keeps up and goes much further, one will soon see those charlatans and those adventurers who, by and large, have undertaken to impoverish the human body, reduced to beggary.

And as an example of the new-old medicine, there is Manardi, with his commentaries on Dioscorides and other ancient naturalists and physicians. We have here one of Rabelais' first literary works, if literary it may be termed. A

translation hardly can hope to convey the rolling Ciceronian, somewhat pompous effect of the original Latin, and no attempt has been made to capture that effect in English, the effort being merely to reproduce the author's thought. The substance of that thought is the attack on "the Barbarians' superannuated glosses." Rabelais' medical criticism, particularly in connection with his editing of Hippocrates and Galen, will be found to be very largely textual and philologic; and even as a textual critic, he is not what would be called modern and scientific: he does not go into textual history, and not infrequently assumes a superior air over what appears to be, merely, the accidental possession of a superior text. The Humanist physicians, like the Humanistic jurists, were primarily concerned with the attack of "Gothic" tradition, with assailing the benighted annotators and glossarists of the few centuries preceding them. The Humanist targets, on the whole, frequently remind one of those of Mr. Mencken and his followers.

The Dedication ends upon a personal note:

Take good care of yourself, and greet for me the most illustrious Lord Bishop of Maillezais, that most benevolent Maecenas of mine, if he should happen to visit you, and my dear Hilaire Goguet, if by any chance he is with you.

It is dated: "Lyons, 3rd. June, 1532."

François, it is to be seen, is not forgetting the friends and benefactors of his youth. As for Goguet, he was a lawyer friend of the Fontenay-le-Comte period. It is to Poitou that Rabelais' memories turn.

A little more than a month later, on July 15, 1532, an edition of Hippocrates and Galen *(Hippocratis ac Galeni*

Libri Aliquot) appeared, bearing a Dedication from Rabelais to Geoffroy d'Estissac. This was a pocket edition of the Latin version of Hippocrates' four works, the *Aphorisms*, the *Praesagia*, the *Ratio Victus in Moribus Acutis*, and the *De Natura Humana*, along with Galen's *Ars Medicinalis*, in the Latin translations of Leonicenus, Cop and Brentius, constituting the prevailing vulgate of these treatises. The Greek text of Hippocrates was given, with Greek marginal notes by Rabelais and variorum Latin glosses. For the 77 pages of the *Aphorisms*, Maître François wrote 187 notes. The edition must have been a successful one, seeing that it was reprinted eleven years later, though Rabelais' marginal annotations were cut down by about two-thirds.

The title-page of this work bears a Latin couplet which is of special interest:

Hic medicae fons est exundantissimus artis.
Hinc, mage ni sapiat pigra lacuma, bibe.

"Here is the overflowing fount of healing lore. Drink here, unless the stagnant water of a ditch tastes better to you."

"One descries here," observes M. Marty-Laveaux, "in advance of the *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, a metaphoric appeal to drinkers, science being represented as a liquid at which one quenches one's thirst, though it is true, we are here dealing, not with wine, but with clear water."

Rabelais' Dedication holds a double interest: for the light it sheds on his student days at Montpellier; and for the information it gives us concerning his relations with his publisher, Sébastien Gryphe:

Most Illustrious Prelate, when last year, at Montpellier,

I publicly explained, in the presence of a numerous auditory, the Aphorisms *of Hippocrates and, afterwards, the* Medical Art *of Galen, I took note of certain passages with the translation of which I was not wholly satisfied. Having compared these renderings with a very old Greek manuscript, written in Ionic characters with much elegance and correctness of style, a copy of which I happened to possess, in addition to the texts in ordinary circulation, I was convinced that the translators had omitted a number of things, and that they had added other extraneous and faulty matter, having weakened at times the expression of the thought, which a good many of them had so much "turned" as, to speak more correctly, diverted from its real sense. Now if this is looked upon everywhere else as a fault, it is a veritable crime in works on medicine. In these works, one little word either added or cut out, or even a sign inverted or drawn backwards, has frequently condemned to death many thousands of persons.*

. . . . . .

Sébastine Gryphe, a printer of consummate taste and experience, having recently glimpsed among my papers these little annotations, and having for a long time had in mind the printing of the works of the old physicians with that same almost unequalled diligence which he brings to bear in all other cases, spent a good deal of talk in the effort to persuade me to permit the publication of these notes for the current use of students; though it was not exactly difficult for him to obtain my consent to do that which I should spontaneously have done without his insistence.

And the personal note:

I shall not here set forth the reasons which have led me to dedicate this work, whatever may be its worth, to you; for whatsoever may come as the fruit of my application belongs as of right to you, who have in the past so warmed me with your benevolence that, wherever I cast my eyes, nothing but the heaven or the sea of your munificence presents itself to my senses,—you who so perfectly fulfil those priestly functions to which you have been elevated by the suffrages of the Senate and the People of Poitou. . . .

There is more in the same vein, the dedicator growing more hyperbolic in his praises and more profuse in his classical allusions, as he rounds out his Ciceronian period.

II

At the begining of August came one of the four great annual Lyons fairs. These fairs, like those of Frankfort in Germany, were famous institutions. Lyons at this period was in a manner of being the crossroads of Europe, where Italy, France, Germany and Switzerland met and passed. There was an important Italian colony there, including a coterie of Petrarchian women poets. The city had become the French money-market for foreign exchange, and bankers had come there from Geneva and from the Italian towns to open up shop and, in some instances, to establish permanent residences, a case in point being that Thomas Gadagne whom Rabelais mentions at the end of the New Prologue to Book Fourth. Merchants from all countries flocked to the rue Mercière (the Via Mercatoria), and the city as a whole had taken on a cosmopolitan aspect, which was merely intensified and carried to an apex at the time of the four fairs, which were held, respectively, on Low Sunday, on the 4th.

of August, on the 3rd. of November, and, according to the old style of reckoning, on the first Monday after the Fête des Rois. These fairs were a veritable wonderland of merchandise, with hucksters from far-away Spain and Flanders in attendance. They were held down in the Saint-Jean and Saint-Paul quarters, the oldest of the city, on the right bank of the Saône, being squeezed in between the river and the hill.

In addition to the other traffic which went on, the book-trade flourished at these seasons, and it had come to be the habit to publish books only at fair-time, in which may be seen the origin of our own custom of seasonal publication. Authors, being an accommodating species, had gradually grown used to the thing, and had come to submit their works —or to aim to submit them—in time for publication at some particular fair. Occasionally, their calculations miscarried, as with John Calvin. We find the reformer writing, in January, 1539:

"While I thought all the time the edition of my book (the *Institutes)* was on the press, here they return my manuscript just as I sent it. I shall have to wait now until the second fair *(in alteras nundinas).*"

Four years earlier, Calvin had had the same experience with the first edition of the *Institutes.* Having turned in the manuscript after the 23rd. of August, 1535, he was too late for the autumn fair, and so, publication had had to be deferred until the spring fair of 1536. The same publishing custom prevailed at Frankfort.

"Books coming from the German presses," says one authority, M. Doumergue, "were published and sold at the time of the Frankfort fairs, which were held in the spring and

autumn of each year. Hence it came about that most works had to be printed by February or March for the spring fair and in August and September for the autum fair."

François probably attended the Lyons fair of August, 1532. At this fair, the season's best-seller in the book line proved to be that Gargantuan Chronicle spoken of above, of which we are told that "the printers have sold more copies in two months than they have Bibles in nine years" (Prologue to Book Second). This work bore the title: "The Great and Inestimable Chronicle: of the Great and Enormous Giant Gargantua: Containing His Genealogy, the Size and Strength of His Body. Also the Marvellous Feats of Arms which He Performed for King Arthur, as Will Be Hereinafter Revealed. Newly Printed, 1532." The printer's name was not given, but the colophon ran: "*A Lyon.*"

It has been believed in the past that Rabelais was the author of this work. At least two of his distinguished bibliographers, the MM. Plan and Brunet, have attributed it to him, as did one of his nineteenth-century editors, M. Paul Lacroix ("L. Jacob, Bibliophile"). M. Plan, in his *Bibliographie*, says: "This little work, which a number of commentators have believed to be no more than a new edition, at Rabelais' hands, of an old popular tale, is in reality *a creation.*" And the same authority adds: "He (Rabelais) had already, in 1533, published at least two editions of the *Pantagruel* and two of the *Chronicle*" (he attributes to Rabelais "an augmented edition of the *Chronicle*" under date of 1533). As for M. Brunet, he upheld the thesis that the *Grandes Cronicques*, with another work, the *Cronicques Admirables* (the date of which is not later than 1534), constituted the first sketch of Rabelais' *Gargantua.* The best

modern editors, however, including Lefranc, Marty-Laveaux, Moland and others, now repudiate this thesis.

"After extended investigation," writes Professor Lefranc, "I have reached the conclusion that the attribution of the *Grandes Cronicques* to Rabelais rests upon no basis worthy of respect. The hypothesis to which a whole line of Rabelais scholars has adhered, and which I regarded as plausible before making a special study of the matter, I now believe to have been definitely eliminated."

One of the arguments against Rabelaisian authorship advanced by Lefranc is the fact that Maître François refers to his *Pantagruel* (in the Prologue to Book Second) as "more worthy of confidence" than was the other chronicle. But the best argument of all is the style of the *Grandes Cronicques*, which are monotonous in tone, heavy in syntax and indigent in vocabulary. The Rabelaisian rhythm, verbal invention and general movement, as well as the unexpected flights of fancy to be found in the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel*, are wholly absent. A few lines, translated with a word-for-word literalness, from the opening of the *Cronicques* will serve to give an idea of their style. The parenthesized French will indicate the paucity of vocabulary:

The said Merlin did (fist) *great marvels* (grandes merveilles), *which are very hard to believe for those who have not seen them. Merlin was of the great* (grand) *council of King Arthur, and all the requests he made at the court of the said King were granted him, whether it was for himself or for others. He saved the King and a number* (plusieurs) *of his barons and gentlemen from great* (grans) *perils and dangers, He wrought many marvels* (fist plusieurs grans

merveilles). *Among which, he built* (fist) *a ship of five hundred tons which went sailing over the earth as you see them doing on the sea. And a number* (plusieurs) *of other marvels* (merveilles) *which would be too tiring to relate, as you shall see further on. After a number of marvels* (plusieurs merveilles) *wrought by Merlin. . . .*

This, most assuredly, does not sound like the Maître, especially that ship "*vagant sur terre.*" Or if it is Rabelais', it is still a young and prentice hand that is to be seen here. Yet, there are certain glints, here and there, which are not wholly un-Rabelaisian; and it is at this point that M. Gaston Paris steps forward with a solution:

"I have no doubt that this book had been revised by Rabelais, who undoubtedly published it at Lyons in 1532. The first book of the *Pantagruel* dates from the end of the year 1532, and the *Gargantua* (Gargantuan Chronicle) which is referred to in the Prologue to that book was certainly a newly published work. Both the *Gargantua* (the Chronicle) as revised by Rabelais and the *Pantagruel*, it is probable and, indeed, practically certain, were put out by the same Lyons publisher within a very short interval of each other; and it is this which renders altogether likely Rabelais' participation in the revision of the *Gargantua* (Chronicle), for he had been at Lyons since the beginning of 1532."

In a certain rewriting of the text evident in the edition of the *Grandes Cronicques* which appeared the following year (1533), Marty-Laveaux is quite sure that he can discern Rabelais' hand. Perhaps, we may let Prof. Lefranc sum up this controversy of the scholars:

"Nothing is more likely than that Rabelais had enjoyed this tale, and that the handling of legendary themes to be found in it had charmed him and had excited his creative verve; but as to his having composed it himself, the style of the little book forever shuts out any such hypothesis. I am not even of the opinion that one is to see in it a youthful work. . . . On the other hand, there is nothing to forbid our supposing that our friend from the Tours country was in touch with its publisher, or that, possibly, he had read the work for the publisher, and had somewhat corrected and revised it. . . . But we decline to go any further than that. As to entertaining the belief that the *Grandes Cronicques* is a creation of Rabelais', such a thing is not to be thought of for a moment."

But whether or not Rabelais was the author (and it is certain that he was not), whether or not he was the reviser of the *Grandes Cronicques*, it is obvious that his *Pantagruel* was composed as a sequel to the *Chronicle*. To perceive this, one has but to read the opening lines of the Prologue to Book Second: "Most illustrious and most chivalrous champions, gentlemen and others, . . . you have already seen, read and are familiar with the *Great and Inestimable Chronicle of the Great and Enormous Giant Gargantua.*" . . . As M. Marty-Laveaux remarks, this is designating the *Chronicle* with the precision of a bibliographer. And later, in his *Gargantua*, Rabelais was to go back and amplify, Rabelaisianize the Gargantuan myth as embodied in the *Grandes Cronicques*. We shall find him lifting from the latter work the names of his principal characters and borrowing outright a number of incidents and suggestions.

One thing which, to this writer, makes it seem likely that

Rabelais, even if he did not actually revise the *Chronicle*, was at least familiar with the work while it was on the press, is the fact that, as we shall shortly see, his Pantagruel (Book Second) was printed in October following, and books to be published at the autumn fair ordinarily had to be on the press by August or September at the latest, whereas the *Grandes Cronicques* had not appeared until the August fair. This would hardly have afforded Maître François sufficient time to have sat down and composed his *Pantagruel* after the *Great and Inestimable Chronicle* had appeared. To balance this, it is possible that the Prologue was written last, in the manner of a preface or introduction, and that Rabelais, in accordance with a literary habit which was to be his, was writing in at the last minute. For it is in the *Gargantua* rather than the *Pantagruel* that the specific influence of the *Chronicle* is to be made out.

To sum up once more: we are certain that Rabelais is not the author of the *Grandes Cronicques;* we are not certain that he did not revise that work; we know, finally, that whatever his relations to it, the Gargantuan Chronicle turned him from erudite editing to popular romance and so led to his becoming the first great writer of French prose. *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* were now to be added to that romantic line represented by *Robert le Diable*, *Huon de Bordeaux*, *Ogier le Danois*, *Les Quatre Fils Aymon*, *Melusine*, *Jean de Paris*, etc., etc.,—not to mention such mythic lucubrations as *Pint-Flogger*, *The Dignity of Flip-Flaps*, *Peas and Bacon cum Commento*, and the like.

III

It was at this period, August–September 1532, that François took a little vacation and went back to visit his native

province, Chinon. Here, we may be justified in violating strict time-order, inasmuch as the Chinon visit has to do essentially with the *Gargantua*, and will be considered in connection with that book. It was, no doubt, after he had the *Pantagruel* on the press that Rabelais took the trip, and the results, accordingly, show not in the *Pantagruel* but in what we know as Book First; if Book Second is the Parisian, Book First is the Chinon chronicle.

Under date of September 4, 1532, we find Maître François dedicating yet another book, one entitled the *Lucii Cuspidii Testamentum*. This is an amusing incident, revealing as it does the occasional gullibility as well as the careless scholarship of the learned Humanists of the time. The *Testamentum* was supposed to be the last will and testament of an old Roman by the name of Lucius Cuspidius, accompanied by a genuine Roman bill of sale. It is now known (a certain erudite archbishop-jurist, Antoine Augustin, later showed it up) that the documents in question, so far from being "monuments of antiquity," were but humorous and clever modern impostures, on the part of two Italian Humanists, Pomponius Laetus and Jovianus Pontanus. The low-Latinity of the language in which they were couched should have betrayed these documents, but Rabelais and a number of scholarly jurists appear to have been deceived. Among the latter was Amaury Bouchard, he who had championed the soulful sex. Bouchard apparently had seen the work in Rabelais' hands at Lyons and had asked for a copy; and so, it is to his friend that François dedicates his find—"having taken, instead, the liberty of having two thousand copies printed."

By this means, while satisfying you, I shall at the same time, under your auspices, gratify many good folks, who will herein learn of the manner in which the Romans, in the good old days, were in the habit of drawing up their wills, together with the style and form of such documents.

I have met many persons who asserted that they possessed, in their libraries, the original manuscript; but I have never yet been able to come upon one who would show it to me.

And Rabelais takes occasion to put in a word for his printer, Gryphius, while turning a neat compliment to Bouchard, by insisting that he is still waiting "for your new treatise on the *Architecture of the World*, which ought to be a work drawn from the purest springs of philosophy."

François' literary activity during the months we have been considering has been a hectic one, indeed. The mere dates of his publications will indicate this: the *Letters of Manardi*, June 3; the Hippocrates and Galen, July 15; the *Grandes Cronicques* (assuming he had a hand in that), the beginning of August; the Will of Cuspidius, September 4. In the course of these months, having formally adopted Lyons as "the seat of my studies" (*ubi sedes est studiorum meorum*), he doubtless had become an intimate of the town's inner circle, the "*sodalitium amicorum lugdunensium*," which was to number, in addition to those writers mentioned above, such others as Héroët, Charles de Sainte-Marthe, Philibert Delorme, the architect, Jean Second, Nicolas Bourbon, Voulté, Ducher, Antoine du Moulin, Benoît Court, Cornelius Agrippa, and such scholars as

Sanctes Pagninus, Tolet, etc. Did this brilliant circle realize that the young bachelor of medicine from Montpellier who was working for his doctorate was destined to become its most brilliant ornament? Was it the competition which had inspired François to so extraordinarily intense and concentrated efforts? Was his intellectual ambition, his desire to shine, to stand out, working again? How much was intellectual ambition, how much the desire to stand out, and how much the necessity of winning a foothold in a workaday world?

For the year was to end with his achieving (November 1, 1532) a salaried post as physician to the Hôtel-Dieu at Lyons, at a salary of forty pounds a year. No vast emolument even for those days, but something on which to keep from starving. On the literary-publishing side, he had made good use of his time by establishing relations with the Württemberger, Greiff, better known under the Latin form of his name, Gryphius, or the French form Sébastien Gryphe, with Claude Nourry, with François Juste, etc. But the climax to this literary *annus mirabilis* was the publication (the printing was completed in October) of: *The Fearful and Appalling Deeds of Prowess of the Most Renowned Pantagruel, King of the Dipsodes, Son of the Giant Gargantua. Newly Composed by Master Alcofribas Nasier. On Sale at the Establishment of Claude Nourry, Known as the Prince, Near Notre-Dame-de-Comfort.*" Rabelais has left the employ of the erudite Gryphe in the rue Thomassin, and French literature is now a fact.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

IN WHICH A "LITTLE DEVIL" AND A GREAT DROUGHT LAUNCH FRENCH LITERATURE

I

Rabelais created French literature. Montaigne, La Fontaine, Molière are his descendants.

CHATEAUBRIAND

This present month was very warm, and it rained but very little in the course of it, doing great damage to the vines, which suffered much on account of the violent heat.

CHRONIQUE PARISIENNE DE PIERRE DRIART

Huchez moy mes deux dyablotins,
Phiton avec Panthagruel
Qui de nuyct vient gecter le sel,
En attendant autres besongnes,
Dedans la gorge des yvrongnes,
Mieulx que deux vieulx dyables chenus.

MYSTERE DES ACTES DES APOSTRES

THE weather, like a poet's digestion or a novelist's lack of digestion, has been known to have its effect upon literature. If it had not been for the great dry-spell which, for some six months, from the spring of 1532 to All Saints' Day of the same year, held all France in a grip, the course of French literature, taking Chateaubriand's laudatory dictum with a degree of literalness, might not have been

radically different in the end, but the literature of the world would certainly have lacked one of its most engaging personages in Pantagruel, King of the Dipsodes.

There had been a foretaste of this *grande sécheresse* in August of the year before, and it is of this month that Driart, the good Chamberlain of Saint-Victor, is speaking in the passage from his Chronicle quoted above; but the heat and the drought came back the following spring, with, seemingly, a renewed intensity, and we overhear our friend Driart rivalling the Oldest Inhabitant by remarking that the month of May has been warmer "than it ever had been in the memory of any man living." It is Driart, likewise, who informs us that the heat kept up until All Saints'. Never had a summer been so long or so hot. Despite what Driart says about the vineyards, the vines throve and the vintage was so excessive a one that there were not vats enough to go around. And in the wake of it all, in Poitou and in Aquitaine, came a deadly outbreak of fevers and epidemics, which the "astrologians," as Jean Bouchet tells us, ascribed to "the too extreme and excessive heat."

If it was hot in Paris, where there seems to have been at least an occasional passing shower, it was, we may be sure, hotter still at Lyons, where François was at this time; for Lyons is noted for its high temperatures. We may, then, picture our ambitious literary medic sweating away over his proofs, his own tongue like those of all the others present fairly lolling out, as he listened to the colourful imprecations and conjurations of the natives, and to the one eternal, unvarying subject of conversation: the weather. Incidentally, he heard frequent allusions to a certain thirst-inspiring "little devil" (*petit diable* or *diablotin*) by the name of

Pantagruel, or Panthagruel, who went about casting salt down people's throats and causing them to "spit cotton" (*cracher aussi blanc comme coton de Malthe*).

Who was this imp of a Pantagruel? For some centuries, since Rabelais' time, he was lost to sight save in the pages of the Maître, and it seemed that the latter's King of the Thirsty Ones was a purely personal and literary creation, with no roots in the popular folklore. If we go back, however, to the late fifteenth-century mystery plays, we shall speedily come upon this same "best little fellow that ever was at the other end of a stick." For example, in Simon Greban's *Mystre des Actes des Apostres*, which was composed in the second half of the century that saw Rabelais' birth, we find among the characters of the "*diablerie*" a little devil by the name of Panthagruel, and we hear Lucifer intoning:

> *Vous, dyableteaux, saillez appertement:*
> *Panthagruel, Phyton semblablement,*
> *Venez moy tous enchaisner, car j'enrage,*
> *Ou consoler mon furieux courage.*

("You, imps, leap forth at once: Pantagruel and Phyton, too; come all and chain me up, for I am raving, or else console my courage turned to rage.") And Proserpina, mother of the devils, addresses his satanic majesty:

> *Mes fils dampnez je te ameine a la monstre:*
> *Phiton, Dagon, aussi Panthagruel,*
> *Puis Arioth, le serpentin cruel.*

("My sons, you who are damned, I call you up: Phiton, Dagon, Pantagruel, too, and Ariot, the cruel serpent.") A

stage-direction reads: "At this point, the four little devils leap forth from Proserpina's side, in a fiery rage, and speaks":

Panthagruel, petit diable.
Mais que a gripper ma rapine je voye
Plus leger suis que n'est oyseau de proye
Pour traverser les regions marines
S'il est besoing qu'au pourchatz je m'employe,
Et que mes grifz et aelles je desploye,
Tantost seray es yles barbarines.

("But when I come to grasp my sword, I am lighter than a bird of prey crossing the sea-wastes; if there is work for me to do and I must spread my claws and wings, at once I am at the barbarian isles.")

Who, it may be asked, are these four imps of Prosperpine? Investigation reveals the fact that they correspond to the four elements, Pantagruel being the sea, Dagon the earth, Aryot (related to Ariel of *The Tempest*) the air, and Phyton, or Phiton, the fire. Pantagruel's business being to cover the "sea-wastes," he not unnaturally covers himself at the same time with salt; he becomes *the salty one*, with a plentiful supply always on hand. Take the passage from the *Actes des Apostres* quoted at the beginning of this chapter:

Whistle me up my two sprites, Phyton with Pantagruel, who by night comes to cast salt, while awaiting other tasks to do, down the throats of drunkards (and does it) better than a pair of hoary old devils.

It is not in the least surprising if this salt-dispersing rogue who makes his debut from under Prosperpina's skirts

eventually finds his way to Paris and the Left Bank—may he not be found today, sitting on the terrace of the Dôme or in the sous-sol of the Select? In another *Mystery*, also of the end of the fifteenth century, the *Vie de Saint Louis par Personnages*, we come upon this reference:

Je vien de la grande cite
De Paris (et) y ay este
Toute nuit. Onquez tel painne n'eu.
A ces galanz qui avoyent beu
Hier au suer jusqua hebreoz,
Tandis qu'ilz estoyent au repos,
Je leur ay par soutille touche
Boute du sel dedans la bouche
Doucement sans lez esveiller,
Mais par ma foy au resveiller
Ilz ont eu plus soef la mitie
Que devant.

("I come from the great city of Paris where I spent the night. I never had such sport. While those gallants, who had drunk since the Lord knows when, were sleeping, I craftily threw some salt into their mouths, very gently and without disturbing them; but upon my word, when they awoke, they were thirstier than they were before.") Hence it was, Pantagruel came to be the jolly distributor of sore-throat, leading inexorably, "*in modo et figura*," to the necessity of wetting one's gullet, or as the contemporary phrase has it, of sprinkling one's tonsils. Pantagruelitis, it seems, is a good deal more violent, and in some cases more chronic, than ordinary pharyngitis: there are symptoms of suffocation, and speech becomes impossible. In the *Vergier d'Honneur*,

a piece of the same period from which we have been quoting, the author, in speaking of a very old man, says: "Pantagruel is scratching him so hard, outside and in, that he cannot talk." There is a similar allusion to a Pantagruelic speechlessness in the *Sottie Nouvelle à Six Personnages*. In brief, this Pantagruel of ours had become a very devil, when it came to making folks so thirsty that they could not even ask for a drink; and when does one think more of thirst than in a dry and rainless summer? All then are Dipsodes, and the King comes into his own.

François, as he bent over his Manardi proofs, the Hippocrates and Galen, or possibly, even (as reviser), the *Grandes Cronicques*, no doubt frequently heard Pantagruel's name being taken in vain; such expressions as "Pantagruel's got me by the throat" or "I've got the old Pantagruel" must more than once have struck his ears. Not only that, but Maître François probably did his share of cursing the weather, and we may be sure that he did it in the popular vein, since it is altogether likely that he talked as he wrote and wrote as he talked. And both Rabelais and his countrymen were familiar with the Imp of Thirst.

The old French theatre, it is to be kept in mind, was a distinctly popular, in no wise a highbrow, institution. The farces, *sotties*, mystery plays, moralities, "devil plays" etc., were as much food for the masses as the movies are today. The highbrow "little theatre" sort of thing was the classic comedy of Plautus and Terence, and classic comedy had a hard time, indeed, gaining a foothold. When the *Andria* of Terence had been attempted in the courtyard of the episcopal residence at Metz, on January 31, 1501, the performance had been stopped by the vineyard labourers, who climbed the

stage and mobbed the actors; and it was not until the next day, and behind closed doors, that the show went on again. Like his Humanist contemporaries, Rabelais himself would have liked to see both the tragedy and the comedy of the ancients restored "to that place of honour which had been usurped by the farces and moralities"; but it was not until the year before his death, in 1552, that French tragedy may be said really to have won the boards, with two performances at Paris of Jodelle's *Cléopâtre Captive;* the *Abraham Sacrifiant* which was performed at Lausanne in 1549 and 1550, and which is sometimes referred to as the first French tragedy, being merely a revival of the mystery play of the Old Testament. Meanwhile, for the first half of the century, the old, people's form of entertainment, with actors and audience somewhat indiscriminately albeit joyously commingled, continued to be the one great public amusement in the way of theatre. The witticisms, gags and wise-cracks of these productions were known by heart and repeated everywhere, and the audience, at any one performance, were, it is likely, quite as familiar with the text as were the performers themselves. And Rabelais, while as a Humanist his sympathies were with Plautus and Terence,—possibly, as a Humanist, he felt that they ought to be there,—would seem to have got quite as much enjoyment as anyone out of the prevailing dramatic bill-of-fare. Allusions, for instance, to the roaring old farce of *Pathelin,* to which Maître François is in no small degree indebted, are numerous in his romance; and to cite but another instance, in that jovial chapter of the *Gargantua* (Chapter XXXIII.) in which Picrochole advises with his lieutenants, we find him lifting from the mediæval *Dialogues de Salomen et Marcoul,* that popular

work in which wisdom and learning as represented by King Solomon are set over against the jocular reflections of a homespun character, Marcoul, an incarnation of the ideal of "good common sense." It was back in Poitou, in connexion with the performances at Doué, Montmorillon, Saumur, Angers and elsewhere, that François had acquired his close-up acquaintance with the theatre; and possessing such an acquaintance, he could not well have avoided knowing Pantagruel and the latter's characteristics and romantic possibilities.

The heat of this famously hot summer does not appear to have smothered Rabelais' ambition. It was in the course of this season that he produced all his early medical and other editions in such rapid-fire succession; and his mind already had turned to another form of literary production, less erudite by far, in fact wholly popular,—even lowbrow, as we would say today.

If it be asked what accounted for this novel ambition, the answer is, simply, in all likelihood: money. The editing of medical and other learned texts was, we may assume, not a highly lucrative pursuit, and it has been hinted by some that Rabelais undertook his romance, first published under the anagrammatic pseudonym of Alcofribas Nasier, by way of compensating his publishers for losses sustained in the marketing of his "serious" works. This hypothesis is open to some doubt, since we know that his Hippocrates and Galen was successful enough to be reprinted more than ten years later. But there were the *Grandes Cronicques* of which I am convinced that Rabelais had seen the proofs; and even in advance of publication, there was doubtless talk, as there is around a publisher's office, of what a hot seller it was ex-

"The Horrible and Dreadful Deeds"

(*Title page of the* Pantagruel, *Edition of* 1533)

pected to be. A book that outsold the Bible by a ratio of more than fifty-four to one—well, it was a temptation for a man of thirty-six (for Rabelais was thirty-six by this time) who was endeavouring to support himself while working toward a doctor's degree and a shingle. This it was, I believe, coupled with a native bent, which led François Rabelais to turn romancer. Literary like other destinies hang on slender threads sometimes; if François had not "needed the money" at this particular period of his life, he might have gone on emendating and commentating medical and other classic texts, and if by so doing he had attained the forgotten fame of a Guillaume Budé, he would have been a fortunate man.

He had, as has been said, a certain flair for the thing. It was as far back as his youthful Fontenay-le-Comte days that President Brisson is reported to have urged him to throw his frock to the dogs in order that the world might enjoy his charming conversation. He must have been a born raconteur, —as a wit, a bit heavy at times; for he had kept heavy company most of his life; and in his humour—shall we agree with Anatole France by finding him a bit inclined to the clerical? Then, at Montpellier, he had come into contact with "the moral basis of laughter," and as a physician of the naturalist school, had learned that to laugh and to keep his patients laughing, if possible, is a doctor's business. Hence it is, we shall shortly find him making his literary bow with a little therapeutics, addressed to the Gouty Ones and others.

François had, then, an idea with a capital I, and was looking for a lower-case one to embody it. We can imagine him mulling his brain and leaping at one idea, only to discard it for another one. Or perhaps, the thing came to him as a flash—the weather! the Great Drought, the like of

which had not been heard of within the memory of man. Was not that what everyone was talking about, the only thing that anyone was able to think about for very long at a time? Rabelais the writer, we shall discover, was always as timely and up-to-the-minute as a modern journalist. That was the idea, the Great Drought; but how to work it up into a takeoff on the old chivalric romances, on the *Grandes Cronicques* sort of thing? More fumbling, it may be; and then, someone in his presence:

"Damme, if Pantagruel—"

"I've got it! I've got it!"

Surprise, not to say amazement, on the part of the interlocutor: "Got what?"

"Pantagruel—"

"So have we all. I don't see—"

But Rabelais saw, and his *Pantagruel* was the result. If he did not put his name to it (and it was not until his Third Book that he came out with "Maître François Rabelais, Doctor of Medicine"), it was not that he was afraid of the consequences and had to wait for Francis' royal Privilege, as an older school of commentators would have it, who see in everything that the Maître wrote a deliberate, deadly and deadly obvious political and social satire; it was, merely, that this was hardly serious work, and François Rabelais was, after all, a Humanist, which is to say, quite a serious person.

II

The *Pantagruel* practically opens on the note of the Great Drought. After turning past the "Pantagruel, King of the Dipsodes" of the title-page and a chapter devoted, in accordance with romantic tradition, to the genealogy of the hero, we come, in Chapter II., upon the following:

But in order to understand fully the cause and reason of that name which was given him in baptism, you should note that there was that year so great a drought throughout all the land of Africa that thirty-six months, three weeks, four days and a little more than thirteen hours passed without any rain, and with the sun so hot that the whole earth was dried up. It was not more scorched in the time of Elijah than it was then, for there was not a single tree on the earth that had either leaf or flower. The grass was without any green, the river-beds were empty, and the fountains were dry; the poor fish, tired of their own element, wandered over the earth, crying horribly; the birds fell from the air for lack of dew; and the wolves, foxes, deer, wild-boars, fallow-deer, hares, rabbits, weasels, martins, badgers and other beasts were to be found dead in the fields, their jaws dropping open.

As to human beings, that was a pity, indeed. You might have seen them with their tongues hanging out like rabbits which have been running for six hours; some cast themselves into the bottoms of wells, while others crawled into the bellies of cows to find a little shade. . . . The whole country was at anchor. It was a pitiable thing to see the effort which human beings expended in protecting themselves against that horrible thirst. It was all they could do to save the holy water in the churches from being used up; but an order went out, from the council of Messieurs the Cardinals and the Holy Father, that no one was to take more than a single lick at it. And so, whenever anyone entered a church, you might have seen a score of poor thirsty devils come running up behind the one who distributed the water, their chops open, in the hope of catching some little drop, like the Poor Rich Man, for they did not want to see any go to waste. Oh, how

happy that year was the one who had a nice, cool, well furnished cellar!

. . . one Friday, when everybody was engaged in devotions, and they were having a fine procession, with many litanies and beautiful chants, begging Almighty God that he would deign to look upon them with an eye of mercy in their discomfort,—while this was going on, there were clearly to be seen, going up from the earth, great drops of water, as when someone is sweating copiously. And the poor people began to rejoice, as though it were something that was going to do them good; for as certain ones remarked, there was not a single drop of moisture in the air from which they might hope for rain, and so the earth was supplying the lack . . . but . . . when the procession was over, and everybody began trying to catch a little of this dew, so that they might be able to drink a good cupful, they found that it was nothing but brine, saltier and worse-tasting than sea-water.

And inasmuch as it was this very day that Pantagruel was born, his father named him as he did; for Panta *in Greek is equivalent to* all *and* Gruel *in the Hagarene language is equivalent to* thirsty, *the inference being that at the child's birth, the world was* all athirst.

There is more in what follows, of an obstetric nature, to justify Pantagruel's title as King of the Thirsty Ones. The etymology given by Rabelais is, needless to say, a burlesque one; but it is not so far-fetched at that. The reference to brine and sea-water is a throwback to Pantagruel's mystery-play rôle of Imp of the Sea.

Pantagruel's thirst-inspiring powers first find exercise on

the occasion of the meeting with the Limousin Student, in Chapter VI. After Pantagruel has taken the student by the throat and made him 'flay the fox":

But the student remorsefully remembered the adventure all his life, and was always so thirsty that he would sometimes remark that Pantagruel was holding him by the throat. And after a few years, he died the death of Roland, thus fulfilling divine vengeance. . . .

The "death of Roland," according to popular tradition, was a death of thirst.

In the following chapter (Chapter VII.), Pantagruel gives the inhabitants of Orléans a touch of his portable thirst. The little devil, grown into a Rabelaisanized giant, has just lifted the enormous bell of St. Aignan's to put it back in its belfry:

But before carrying it to the belfry, Pantagruel thought he would serenade the city by ringing the bell through the streets, with one hand. This amused everyone very much; but a great misfortune resulted from it. For as he was ringing the bell in this manner through the streets, all the fine wine of Orléans turned and spoiled. But nobody knew anything about this until the night following, when all felt so great a thirst from having drunk this spoiled wine that the only thing they could do was to spit Maltese cotton and remark: "We've got the old Pantagruel; our throats are salty."

To show the lack of imagination on the part of your professional glossarist, howsoever learned,—and the more learned, the less imaginative, likely—Le Duchat, in annotating this passage observes: "I should have thought that the

whole effect which such a bell-ringing might have produced would be to have muddied the wine in the vats; I do not understand how it could have spoiled the wine for good." In this case, however, scholarship has been of service by excavating the old Pantagruelic legend, with which Le Duchat is not familiar.

In Chapter XIV., Panurge finds the very shadow of Monseigneur Pantagruel thirst-engendering, as the moon is of catarrhs. In Chapter XVIII., Thaumast, the Englishman, following his interview with Pantagruel at the Hôtel Saint-Denis, goes back to the Hôtel de Cluny and remarks to the concierge "that never before, in all his life, had he been so thirsty as he was that evening." In Chapters XXVIII. and XXIX., descriptive of Pantagruel's warfare with the giants, will be found a number of other equally obvious allusions to the myth; while in a pirated edition of the *Pantagruel*, believed to have been published by Marnef at Poitiers the year following, there occurs a passage which, while it is quite evidently not Rabelais', nevertheless shows a crude popular attempt to write-in the legend. This passage, in the Marnef edition, immediately follows the one quoted above, ending with the words "saltier and worse-tasting than sea-water":

Another still greater adventure happened that same week to the giant Gargantua. For a wicked rascal, loaded down with two big pouches of salt, along with a ham-bone which he had hidden in his wallet, entered the unfortunate Gargantua's mouth, while the giant was sleeping with his mouth open on account of the great thirst which he had. This mischievous lad, having gone in, cast a quantity of salt over

Gargantua's palate and down his gullet, whereupon Gargantua, suffering from an enormous thirst and dryness, and knowing of no remedy to quench it, became enraged and gnashed and crashed his teeth together so violently that it was like a battle of mills. And as the chap told me afterwards, . . . all he did was to fall down like a dead man, abandoning his two sacks full of salt with which he had been tormenting the poor Gargantua; and the sacks were at once swallowed up.

At that, this fine chap of whom I have been telling you swore that he would be revenged. Poking his hand down into his wallet, he drew out a big, thick ham-bone, very salty, with the fuzz all of two feet and four inches long still clinging to it; and this he wrathfully hurled down Gargantua's throat. The giant, poor fellow, thirstier than ever, was forced to vomit and throw up all that he had inside his body, which was more than eighteen tumbril-carts could have hauled away. In the meanwhile, the rascal who had caused all the mischief, and who had taken refuge in one of the giant's hollow teeth, was dislodged in so piteous a plight that all who saw him were horrified. Gargantua, looking down, caught sight of this master-rogue, whirling around and around and doing his best to get out of the great sea; and he thought to himself that this must be some worm which had been giving him the heart-burn; and he was very glad that he had it out of his body.

This extraneous episode jumbles the plot more than a little. The thirst-inspiring, it is to be noted, is here done by a "master-rogue" who is quite dissociated from the giant-hero's personality proper; and the thirst-inspirer is still an

imp, whereas Rabelais elevates him to gigantesque stature. At the end of the same chapter in the Marnef edition, there is another brief interpolated passage which assigns Pantagruel his true rôle, though this passage, occuring in the same chapter, is none too consistent with the one just quoted:

The descendants of Pantagruel are those who drink so much in the evening that they are forced to get up in the night to take another drink, in order to extinguish their excessive thirst and the glowing coals which they have in their throats. And this variety of thirst is known as the Pantagruel, in memory of the Pantagruel of whom we have told you above.

With Rabelais himself, it is not until the Limousin episode in Chapter VI. that the rôle of his hero becomes quite plain; and this is a role which is to become more and more subordinate and incidental as the character of Pantagruel and the doctrine of Pantagruelism which that character embodies become more highly worked out in the course of succeeding books. We also see in this interpolated episode an attempt to drag in Gargantua by the heels. The writing, what the French call the *invention*, of the excerpt is inferior to the *Maître's*. The value of this spurious variant lies in the light it throws upon the popular mythos. Rabelais, in the case of both his Pantagruel and his Gargantua, was dealing with material that was common property, the property of anyone who cared to use it; and it is not likely that he took his auctorial rights any too seriously, except, as later, in a case where false works printed under his name or (as he asserts) garbled versions of his own writings might get him into very serious trouble.

Enough has been said to show the inspiration, the initial impetus, which Rabelais derived from the Little Devil and the Great Drought, and to show something of the use which he made of his material. The question now arises: what, aside from his intimate acquaintance with the popular folklore and the literature embodying it, were François' literary background and antecedents; what are the "influences" to be found in his work? Since it seems that influences must always be traced, though they are somtimes better left untraced, the card-index lucubrations of the graduate seminar being endowed with a certain positive negativeness that gives them a potentiality for mischief when they enter the domain of creation. In such a case, a consciousness of the perilous paths one treads may help somewhat; and in a Life which purports to be a biography of a mind, rather than a jaunty fictional reconstruction of mistresses and creditors, anecdotes and adventures, the furnishings of the subject's mind become of first importance.

III

Rabelais' first outstanding literary work appeared at what might be termed the psychologic moment. The year 1532 is a significant one in the history of French literature, marking as it does the publication not only of the *Pantagruel*, but of Marot's *Adolescence Clementine* and the *Miroir de l'Ame Pécheresse*, or Mirror of the Sinful Soul, of Marguerite d'Angoulême, better known as Marguerite of Navarre (a work the translation of which is attributed to England's Virgin Queen, then Princess Elizabeth, at the tender age of eleven). The author of the *Heptameron* (printed twenty-six years later, a decade after Marguerite's

death) was to become the centre of a brilliant coterie, including Marot, Rabelais and others, a milieu reflecting that new Renaissance grace of life which came from the general direction of Italy, and which was inspired by much the same ideals as those set forth in the *Cortegiano* of Castiglione. An ideal of elegance in daily living had come in, an ideal encouraged by the court, which made frequent journeys about the kingdom, often stopping, among other places, at Lyons. Conversation flourished, and dialogue became a literary fashion, a fondness for the form being evident in Rabelais as in the *Heptameron* and other works. Life and the movement of life was the thing sought, and an effort was made to catch that movement in the moving word. We shall find Maître François, upon occasion, reacting against this sometimes overstudied grace and graciousness, against the "Lanternese" jargon of the courtiers as against the "Latinizings" of the schoolboys. He belonged, it is true, at least nominally, to the Queen of Navarre's circle; we possess no very definite information as to just what his relations to the group were; but we fancy him, somehow, as being rather on the perimeter. Humanist as he was, his own bent, his own genius was popular in cast. Marguerite was to be responsible for the introduction of Platonism into France, and in no small degree responsible for the French Renaissance as a whole. She was to take a leading part in the Querelle des Femmes, a controversy in which Rabelais' voice was to be heard, on the other side and in no uncertain tones, in Book Third, a book which he, none the less, dedicates to the Queen.

The decade so begun—it had really begun with Francis' establishment of the Collège de France in 1530—was to continue a brilliant one. Rabelais' *Gargantua* was soon to follow

(1534), with Calvin's *Institutes* coming in 1536, to be translated into French five years later, and with Des Periers' *Cymbalum Mundi en François* and the second volume of the *Commentarii Linguae Latinae* of Étienne Dolet rounding off the ten years of Humanistic and literary development, the whole crowned in 1539 by the promulgation of the royal edict of Villers-Cotterets, which made France safe for Humanism.

This decade had not come in utterly unheralded. As we have seen, there were stirrings back in the latter years of the decade preceding. Geoffroy Tory and his *Champ Fleury* have been spoken of; but there was another work of Tory's published in 1529, which had a very direct influence, and an important one, upon Rabelais. This was a French translation of the *Dialogues* of Lucian. A taste for Lucian had previously been disseminated through the Latin translations of Erasmus and those of Sir Thomas More, whose Utopians, it may be recalled, were greatly taken with the graces of the Greek writer; but it was Tory's vernacular rendering which made Lucian known to the French reading public. Tory's style even, in more than one spot, may be looked upon as a precursor of that of the *Pantagruel*. Rabelais undoubtedly was able to read the Hellenic satirist in the original, but it was frequently his custom, in the case of Greek and Latin authors, to make use of current translations. We know, moreover, that Rabelais appreciated the worth of Tory, who had fought against pedantic tendencies to deform the French language.

It is not surprising, then, if the influence of Lucian is an outstanding one in the *Pantagruel*, while the author of the latter work came to be looked upon, and damned, as the

Lucian of the Gauls. Voulté called him "the ape of Lucian," and "*n'étant que la copie de Lucien*" is the verdict of a later commentator, Bernier, himself a physician. In Rabelais' case, it was not merely an influence of form and style, but one of ideas; his thinking would not have been the same if he had not read his Lucian—one might say, possibly, if he had not read Tory's Lucian. As a result, he was to be credited with having revived "the satire and the redoubtable irony of the greatest laugher of antiquity, the audacious spurner of the gods."

The influence of Lucian is to be seen with special vividness in such a passage as Chapter XXX. of the *Pantagruel*, where Epistemon's descent into hell is described. Here, it is the dialogue *Menippus seu Necryomantia* that is being drawn upon. Lucian gives us a picture of the philosophers, Socrates and Diogenes, in hell, revenging themselves upon the royal Xerxes and Philip. The last-named is depicted as patching shoes in a corner, while Xerxes, Darius and Polycrates are begging in the street. To this picture is opposed the happiness of the philosophers, with Socrates strolling up and down, mocking at all and chatting with the eloquent dead, as Diogenes drowns with his sportive cries the lamentations of Midas and Sardanapalus. Such is Maître François' material. Read the thirtieth chapter, and see how he works it up. The freedom he elects in improvising upon his source is to be noted. Like Shakespeare, he is never squeamish about borrowings or what he does with them, but he seldom makes a servile copy; he is gifted with too much vitality of his own.

The borrowings from Lucian throughout Rabelais' work are far too numerous to be listed here, but we may note one other striking example which is to come later, in

the Picrocholine conference of the *Gargantua*, Chapter XXXIII. In Lucian's *Navigium seu Vota*, Samippus, the principal character, having been invited to make a wish, wishes that he may be king, and his wish is granted. He conquers Greece, finds at Cenchrea sufficient rations for an expedition, and reaches Ionia. He then subjugates Caria, Lycia, Pamphylia, etc., and reaches the Euphrates. In the meantime, another wing of his army subdues Phoenicia, Palestine and Egypt; etc. Compare these details, one by one, with Pircochole's grandiose dream of world-conquest; they will be found to correspond in every particular. Lucian has provided the framework, and Rabelais has built upon it a living structure.

The Epistemon episode introduces Rabelais' two other masters, his two great French masters as Lucian was his Greek model: François Villon and Jean le Maire de Belges.

"It is to be noted," says Professor Lefranc, "that the two French writers to whom Rabelais is most indebted figure together, and with analogous roles, in this celebrated passage."

Rabelais' mind, there can be no doubt, would not have been what it was if Villon had not written. The Villon influence is a pervasive and at times a subtle one. It shows, now in a tag from the Testament, now in a quip or a turn of phrase from the *Repues Franches* or the *Franc Archier de Baignollet*. Sometimes, in the later books, it stands out openly, as in the thirteenth chapter of the Fourth Book, describing the devil-show which that other Maître François, according to Rabelais' "so veracious" narrative, put on at Saint-Maixent in Poitou, and the gory punishment meted out to Frair Stephen Taptail, or as in the concluding chap-

ter of the Fourth Book, in the anecdote concerning Villon and the King of England. A case even has been made out for Villon's being the original of Panurge.

As for Le Maire de Belges, his influence, being primarily linguistic, naturally does not stand out so prominently for the English reader; but from the point of view of language, Le Maire was Rabelais' precursor and master; the latter writer drew upon the former's *Contes de Cupido et d'Atropos,* and according to Professor Lefranc, repaid his debt by immortalizing Le Maire as the Raminagrobis (identified by most commentators as Guillaume Cretin) of Book Third. In the Epistemon chapter, an allusion is made to two anti-papal works which Le Maire had just published.

Continuing with our "influences," the next most important one that we discover is a contemporary and Humanistic one coming from outside France, in the Utopia of Sir Thomas More, which had been published some sixteen years before. Rabelais quite obviously borrowed from More the idea and the name of Utopia. More was, like Erasmus, not merely one of the greatest Humanists, but one of the greatest intelligences of his age, and Maître François owes a debt to both More and Erasmus; we shall very shortly hear him putting into words his feeling of indebtedness toward the latter. The More influence is to be seen in the expedition to Utopia, in Chapters XXIV. ff. Sir Thomas even has been identified as the "great English scholar," Thaumast, who comes to dispute with Pantagruel and who is so ignominiously routed by Panurge; though M. Plattard, among others, is inclined to doubt this.

Among Gallic "sources" which should not be overlooked are Clément Marot, whom Rabelais was probably meeting

at Lyons at this time, and the Humanist jurisconsults, whose ideas the Maître did so much to publicize and popularize.

Among other possible foreign influences, there is a double one coming from Italy, in the works of Pulci and Folengo. It has by no means been established that Rabelais possessed a first-hand acquaintance with the former's *Morgante Maggiore,* but it is much more certain that the *Opus Macaronicum of Folengo* (better known as Merlinus Cocaius, or Coccaius) had a direct influence. These burlesque epics contributed, through stories of the giants, Morgante and Fracassus, and their companions, Margutte and Cingar, toward shaping the gigantesque idea with the author of the *Gargantua and Pantagruel.* But making a king of his giant is Rabelais' own twist; up to that time, the giant had played a purely subordinate role, that of one struggling and fighting for his sovereign's sake. It is quite possible, and quite easy, to overestimate the weight of this Italian influence, and it has been so overestimated in the past; but on the other hand, the influence is there and cannot be denied.

In addition to all these sources of influence, there is always Rabelais' classical background as a whole. There is Plutarch, "the preceptor of the Renaissance," and there is Pliny the Elder. François is known to have possessed a number of copies of Plutarch, while the *Morals* were his *livre de chevet.* From Plutarch, the creator of Gargantua and Pantagruel has drawn a number of themes, allusions, anecdotes and descriptions. The elder Pliny served him as an encyclopædia of facts; Rabelias rarely draws on Pliny for inspiration, though in the Pantagruelion chapters which bring the Third Book to a close, he is to be found improvising on a theme from this author. This is to mention but one prominent pair

of classical writers. The merest glance at Rabelais' pages is sufficient to show his saturation with the authors of classical antiquity. In this summary tracing of intellectual debts, an attempt has been made to treat Rabelais' debits not so much as debts, but rather as mental furnishings. After all, this was the man's mind, plus his genius, plus his experience of life, incalculable elements always. These were the materials and the tools in and with which his genius played and worked. Without that genius, they would have been but the period-pieces of a somewhat too scholarly cranium: dry and useless lumber, and dead, dead—

IV

In sitting down to write his *Pantagruel*, Rabelais followed the general scheme of composition afforded him by the old romances of chivalry. His romance, like the others, may be divided into three parts: the first describing the genealogy and marvellous birth of the hero, the second describing the hero's youth; and the third relating the hero's "*prouesses*," or deeds of prowess, which in this case include a sea voyage and a war against the Dipsodes. In his second section, Maître François, in narrating Pantagruel's visit to Paris and the forming of his hero's friendship with Panurge, takes occasion to make copy of his own comparatively recent experiences at the capital; while in the Utopian expedition, he shows his familiarity with the geographic adventures and discoveries of his age, and with the geographers and cosmographers of the period; his indebtedness to the *Novus Orbis* of Grynaeus has been mentioned.

This book, possibly, possesses the least unity of any of the five of Rabelais' romance. The second portion is the most

remarkable from the literary point of view, containing pages which the other books, while undoubtedly better composed on the whole, have not surpassed. For one thing, we may note in this part the absence of the gigantesque motive, the abnormal element; while Gargantua's letter to Pantagruel, in the eighth chapter, is an expression of the highest ideals of the Renaissance. In the opening passages, it might seem that the Maître had set out, more or less deliberately, to write a best-seller in imitation of the *Grandes Cronicques*, something that would catch and hold the public eye; in these pages will be found a more popular style, a more directly and deliberately popular appeal; whereas the closing portion has been conceived in a spirit and in a tone of bold satire. Some of the incidents in the book have a puerile character, while the Rabelaisian vocabulary is less rich than elsewhere; but in boldness of ideas, some would say that the author had here gone further than in all the rest of his work.

A young writer—"young" being here employed in the technical literary sense—setting himself down to write a best-seller, to be popular, to be lowbrow, does not always succeed in being so lowbrow as he had aimed; he may or may not be conscious of this, and it may or may not interfere with the appeal and the success of his work. Such a case was Rabelais'. Drawing his inspiration from the *Grandes Cronicques*, he was writing to please the mob; but he was a parson and a scholar, as well as a physician, and he could not altogether sidestep the stigmata of those professions: his humour and the points of his jests are frequently clerical, scholarly and medical. His French biographer, M. Plattard, has called attention to a number of passages and incidents in this first book which were, surely, over the heads of the sixteenth-

century citizenry: the meeting, in Chapter VI., of Pantagruel and the Limousin Scholar with his pig-Latin; the meeting of Pantagruel and the hungry but polyglot Panurge, in Chapter IX.; the catalogue of books in the Library of St. Victor's, in Chapter VII.; the trial between the two lords, in Chapters X. ff., the most James-Joycean passage in all Rabelais; and finally, Gargantua's letter, in Chapter VIII. Fortunately, such passages as these do not seem to have rendered the work any the less popular. As far away as Paris, the *Pantagruel* was soon being talked about and imitated. In August of the year following, we come upon a *Livre de Marchands, Fort Utile à Toutes Gens*, advertised as the work of Pantapole, "Seigneur Pantagruel's next-door neighbor." The *Pantagruel* itself was destined to run through many reprints and to be more than once pirated. On the 25th of September, 1533, a Parisian goodman, one Jacques Le Gros, lists it as among the romances of chivalry and other lighter reading matter to be found in his library.

One of the things which made the work popular was its lively topicality. Everyone still remembered and still talked about the Great Dry Spell, of which Bouchet and Driart have given us a lasting record. But there are references to a number of other current happenings of the time, among which we may note: the pardon and jubilee decreed to France by Clement VII.; the panic over the Turkish question, in May, 1532; the arrest of a number of usurers by royal order the same year; the plague which followed in the wake of the drought; etc. François had hit the right stride, after all. He likely did not make a great deal of money out of his books,—the printers and book-sellers took most of that,—but he was doomed to be a popular writer, and as such to

be damned by the intelligentsia (it is a little way the intelligentsia have) for some centuries to come—Montaigne was to allude to his works as "*dignes qu'on s'y amuse.*" He might even have become a best-seller and have outsold the *Grandes Cronicques*, not to mention any longer the Bible, had it not been for that ever-present spectre, the Sorbonne, of which we shall shortly hear. A gruesome spectre, since behind it flamed the stake.

V

When Rabelais later published his second book, what we know as Book First, the *Gargantua*, he labelled it "Book Full of Pantagruelism." He was playing, in other words, upon the popularity which his first effort had achieved. When a book becomes popular enough to add a word to the language, even though the adoption be auctorially suggested, it is popular, indeed. What had happened was, the character of Pantagruel had become a synonym for a state of mind, which, with Maître Francois' growing maturity, was to achieve the intensity of a state of soul. What is Pantagruelism, what is its essence?

The thing, the quality has been as variously defined as there are various individuals to hazard a definition. We have seen what the definition of the Old Boy with the Green Umbrella is. Unluckily, most of the statements come from glossarists who lived at some remove from the founder of the cult. Éloi Johanneau of the French Variorum gives the definition: "A freedom of spirit that lifts man above the course of events. It is the true philosophy of Epicurus." Jean-Baptiste Rousseau's wording (in his verses to the Abbé de Châlieu) was: "A soul free and disengaged" (*Une âme libre et dégagée*). Émile Faguet tells us: that Pan-

tagruelism is a "*stoïcisme gai*"; he sees the Maître as the incarnation not only of the ideas of the Renaissance, but of the philosophy of "common sense" and the golden mean. This "philosophy of common sense," as M. Plattard notes, is scarcely a degree above La Fontaine's "natural reason, reasoning little, refining not at all . . . good sense plus a little cultivation." M. Faguet further informs us that Rabelais' mind is "without mystery. . . . A few truths, derived from common sense and an upright heart, without any very stable link between them, is all that he undertakes to give us."

The truth to this biographer would seem to be that François, with a very real *joie de vivre*, which is evident throughout his work, is simply a natural and naturalistic optimist, of the sort to be found frequently in the ranks of the medical profession. The Maître must have had a good digestion and, like Asclepiades (whom he cites in the New Prologue to Book Fourth), have believed that a physician's first duty is to keep himself well and happy. But of one thing we may assure ourselves, and that is, that Pantagruelism is not the philosophy of a drunkard or a debauchee, a Roger Bon Temps of the barroom or the brothel; there is nothing in Rabelais' work itself to justify any such view. Yet this interpretation, or something very like it, was one frequently given to the term, Pantagruelism, as witness the following verses:

C'est du bon temps joyeusement user,
Peu lire ès doctes écritures,
Sans remords prendre ses ébats,
N'avoir procès, ne noise, ne débats,

Chercher souvent la gente bachelette,
Boire et manger, rire et chanter d'autant,
Sans cure avoir, ne soin de demeurant.

("It is to make a joyous use of fair weather, to read little in learned writings, to take one's diversions without remorse, to have no lawsuits, quarrels or disputes, to seek out often the gentle maid and not to spare the little blonde widow, to drink and eat, to laugh and sing a great deal, without a care or tie." This for a definition of the verb, "to Pantagruelize." Verily, the Old Boys have their ancestors!

Rabelais gives us his own early definition at the close of the *Pantagruel*, in the words: "And if you wish to be good Pantagruelists, that is, to live in peace, happiness and good health, enjoying yourselves always," etc. This, certainly, is our friend, the doctor, speaking—the doctor, whose gospel for his patients is: Be jolly; if you can't be jolly, at least be cheerful. And it is likely that this is as far as Maître François had gone at the time toward bestowing a content upon his word, which he probably had coined with no great or serious forethought. In the Prologue to Book Third, we have a slight advance: "A certain specific and individual quality which our elders termed Pantagruelism, a quality which never permits them to take anything in bad part which they know springs from a good, free and loyal heart." Pantagruelism has now become a social code, if not a moral doctrine. Finally, in the New Prologue to Book Fourth, comes what may be regarded as the author's definitive statement: "Pantagruelism, which is, you understand, a certain cheerfulness of disposition preserved in despite of fortuitous circumstances." This was all that Rabelais meant to confer

upon the word. I do not believe that he ever took the word too seriously or too lightly. While this "cheerful stoicism" may sum up his everyday working philosophy of life, it is not to be taken as embodying the whole of his philosophy, and certainly not his religion.

Inasmuch as Pantagruelism is the quality of being like Pantagruel, the gradual evolution of that hero's character should be instructive in determining the meaning of the word. Pantagruel starts out as a gigantic and blustering tippler, but he ends up as "a model of moral equilibrium and tranquil wisdom."

But what of Panurge, that Jack-of-All-Trades, as his Hellenic name signifies, that rascal, trickster, toper, pavement-pounder, Parisian night-hawk, and with it all, "the finest lad in the world," with his sixty-three methods of raising money when he needed it, "of which the commonest and the most honourable was that of sneak-thievery"? This Falstaffian fidus Achates has, like his master, become the central figure of a fair-sized literature, there being something like twenty-five editions of the popular works known as *The Disciple of Panurge* and *The Navigations of Panurge*. Panurge is, originally, an incarnation of cunning; the epithet is one applied to the fox in Aristotle, Aelian and other Greek writers. But he, too, develops in character as surely as does his master; only his progress is downward, not up. He grows, at last, into an arrant coward,—see the storm scene in the Fourth Book,—or at least, into a combination of the swaggerer and the coward, in which, as Paul Stapfer says, he "imitates Villon and ushers in Gavroche."

In the beginning, however, he is essentially a student, a university type, his native cunning being employed to offset,

and as a contrast to, the giant master with more strength than brains—Rabelais' giants, both of them, are simple, well-meaning souls "in a big way," but a trifle weak in the head. Panurge's initial role is, therefore, a useful and a beneficent one, and he is quite as courageous at first as are his companions, while his cunning wins Pantagruel's admiration. In the Paris interlude, on the other hand, he is the "*mauvais escholier*," pure and simple, of Villon's day, and the identification of Panurge as the gallows-poet does not seem so far-fetched as it might.

His character, in more ways than one, resembles that of Cingar in Folengo's epic, and more particularly, that of Margutte in Pulci's Morgante Maggiore (there is also a resemblance to the Brunello of the *Orlando Innamorato* of Boiardo). And as he sketched in his master-rogue, Rabelais must have had in mind the *Repues Franches* of Villon, the *Franc Archier de Baignollet, Pierre Faifeu*, etc.

But the imitative element must not be overstressed; Maître François may have drawn his unforgettable portrait from the life; he may have known, in the quarter of the schools at Paris, a real-life Panurge. As for the close comradeship of a rogue and a prince, the theme was one which Shakespeare was to pick up in his Falstaff; while the circumstance was to be seen in the life, in Rabelais' century, in the friendship which the blackmailing Aretino, that "Scourge of Princes," shared with the popes and princes of the earth.

The commentators, however ("*non commentatores, sed tormentatores*"), must needs have a good time out of the thing; and they have found almost as good game in the noisy Panurge as in the truculent Friar John. Among the personages whom they have seen in the former may be mentioned:

The Cardinal d'Amboise;
The Constable Anne de Montmorency;
Jean de Montluc, Bishop of Valence;
Charles de Guise, Cardinal of Lorraine;
Rabelais himself.

As for our friend Johanneau of the interminable allegorizings, he holds to the view that Panurge is the Cardinal of Lorraine, and the lengths to which he goes to support his thesis make laughable reading at times. Let us, then, be content with saying that Panurge is a student type—whether the portrait be an individual or a composite one matters little—whom Rabelais had picked up and started off to treat in the manner of the Italian macaronic and burlesque-epic-writers. But Rabelais happened to be a creator, and his creations, his characters, do not stand still; they go backward or forward; they grow in one direction or another, for good or ill. In this case, Pantagruel goes forward and Panurge backward, the former developing from a mock-hero into a real and philosophic one, while Panurge would end up as the villain of the piece, if it were not for his achieved cowardice of soul. A forthright villain could scarcely experience the unmentionable accident which happens to Panurge in the concluding chapter of Book Fourth.

VI

In connexion with this book, Professor Lefranc makes much of what he is pleased to term Rabelais' "atheism," as exhibited in the author's travesties of sacred things—for example, the parody of the genealogy of Christ in the opening chapter, the slighting allusions to the popes, the liberties taken with Holy Writ and the ceremonies of the Catholic

Church, the take-off on miracles in the cure of the beheaded Epistemon, the use that is made of Christ's words on the cross, etc. At this point, it may suffice to state that the liberties which Maître François takes are not a whit more daring than those which unchallenged adherents of the Church almost daily permitted themselves. What today would be looked upon as blasphemies were not so regarded in Rabelais' time; and some of the latter's most shocking impieties were not original with him—as the *Lama Sabachthani*, in Chapter XXIX., which does not happen to be Rabelais', but Masuccio's.

But if we may pass over for the present Rabelais' imputed atheism in this, his first really literary work, something must be said, for the sake of biographic continuity, of his relation to Protestantism and to the Reformers. We have seen that there was an early and vaguely general bond of sympathy between Humanists and Reformationists, and we have found François occasionally consorting with prelates and others, such as Briand Vallée, with a mild leaning toward the new reform in the Church, men essentially of the middle path, who wished to see abuses within the Church rectified, but who, like Erasmus, would have shuddered at any thought of heresy or schism. We have heard Jean Bouchet, whose Catholicism was beyond question, preaching in his verse the sufficiency of the Scriptures. And at Orléans, Rabelais had come into contact with a definite Reform group, and had possibly met Calvin there, as he surely had Daniel, Hervet, Framberge and others. He had, one might say, been exposed to Protestantism, but had not "caught" it as yet. These impieties in his first book which we have just been considering have no more to do with the case than they have

to do with the question of François' "atheism";—some of them miss being humorous, and are no more than the bad taste which a beginning and unpared writer has been known to display. The book as a whole, indeed, is gay and youthful and rather blithely unconcerned with all graver issues. Yet, there is one passage in it which strikes a distinct, unmistakable, out-and-out Protestant note, and that is Pantagruel's prayer, in Chapter XXXIX., just before joining battle with Werewolf (Loupgarou):

As Werewolf most ferociously came up, Pantagruel, casting up his eyes toward heaven, commended himself to God with all his heart, and made the following vow:

"O Lord God, Thou who hast always been my Protector and my Saviour, Thou seest the distress in which I am at this moment. Nothing brings me here except natural zeal, such as Thou hast conferred upon human beings in order to enable them to guard and defend themselves and their wives, their children, their countries and their families. I am speaking of cases in which there is no question of Thine own business, which is the keeping of the faith; for in such a case, Thou wishest no coadjutor except a Catholic confession and the service of Thy word. And Thou hast, in that case, forbidden us all arms and defences, seeing that Thou art the All-Powerful, who, where Thine own business or Thine own cause is concerned, canst defend Thyself far beyond all human power of thought, Thou who hast a thousand thousands of hundreds of millions of legions of angels, the least of which is able to slay the whole of humankind and to overturn heaven and earth at his pleasure, as formerly was apparent in the case of Sennacherib's army.

"*And so, if it should please Thee at this moment to aid me, since in Thee is all my confidence and my trust, I hereby make Thee a vow that in all countries, both in this land of Utopia and elsewhere, wherever I may find myself possessed of any power or authority I shall cause Thy holy gospel to be preached, purely, simply and in its entirety, in order that the abuses of a host of hypocrites and false prophets who, by human and depraved means, have envenomed the world may be exterminated round about me.*"

And then, there was heard a voice from Heaven, saying: Hoc fac et vinces, *that is to say: "Do this, and thou shalt be victorious."*

The words "purely, simply," etc., are directly out of John Calvin's mouth; they are to be found in a speech which he, one year later (November 1, 1533), caused to be delivered by the rector of the University of Paris, a speech which raised the cry of heresy from the Sorbonnists. Maître François, thus, is lining up with the Protestants. In his next book, the *Gargantua*, he is to become still more violently Reformistic, "and for a reason," as we shall see. It is not until his Fourth Book that his disillusionment with Calvin and the latter's followers is brought to a head in print.

Meanwhile, the Calvinists were to take none too kindly to this new convert, if convert he was, who mingled his sermons with the "obscenities" of "that devil called Pantagruel." We shall soon behold the Protestants up in arms and aligning themselves with the reactionary Catholics over this little Imp of Thirst who, as the result of a long, dry summer, had grown into an obscenity-spouting giant, creating French literature as he went.

CHAPTER TWELVE

BREASTS OF WISDOM;

"MAMMILLARILY SCANDALOUS"

So you, without having seen my face, without my name being known to you, have still, uninterruptedly, reared and nourished me on your own most chaste breasts of divine doctrine.

THE LETTER TO ERASMUS

And, indeed, this proposition has been declared to be mammillarily scandalous and offensive to pious ears, and one that smells of heresy a long way off.

BOOK FIRST, CHAPTER VII.

I

A GOOD part of François Rabelais' life and a very large proportion of his energies were taken up with the problem of how to assure himself a decent livelihood. When his monk's frock had first begun to weigh heavily upon his shoulders, at Fontenay-le-Comte, his thoughts had turned to an ecclesiastical benefice, a living in the Church; and as he lolled in bed at Ligugé, composing a verse epistle to his friend, Jean Bouchet, this had been the thing on his mind. We have seen him nibbling at both the law and medicine,

and finally giving his choice to the latter calling. Then, he had had to leave the university at Montpellier for a spell and go to Lyons, where those million black teeth were grinding away, where there were proofs to be read and texts to be edited and prefaces to be written and merry old romances from the fast-fading days of chivalry to be revamped and put into best-selling shape. At Lyons, François had been attracted by the financial possibilities of the last-mentioned occupation, and his *Pantagruel* had been the result. And now, he was to get his first real, steady and paying job.

Claude Nourry, Rabelais' printer, finished with the composition of the *Pantagruel* in the month of October, 1532, and the volume was put on sale at the November fair. On November 1, François, who had returned but recently from a visit to Chinon and La Devinière, was appointed to the post of physician of the Hôtel-Dieu of Lyons. Our authority for this is the records of the institution itself, the *Comptes de l'Hôtel-Dieu;* and Rabelais' salary, as has been stated, was the munificent sum of forty pounds a year. In this position, François succeeded, as we learn from the *Comptes,* one Pierre Roland.

The full and imposing title of the institution was the "Grand Hostel Dieu de Nostre Dame de Pitié du Pont-du-Rhone." This hospital, which stood in the Saint-Paul quarter, was a very old one, having been founded, tradition would have it, by Childebert. In Rabelais' time, it was a flourishing and a busy establishment. It may still be seen occupying an important place on the old maps of Lyons, though no trace of the structure that housed it remains. From a description of the place written a few years after Rabelais was there, we are able to visualize its walnut beds

with their linen "clean, white and well kept." The men and women patients were segregated, but could see each other. There was a great fireplace for warmth, a chapel where a daily mass was said and a maternity annex, while contagious cases were isolated; from which it may be seen, the institution was a fairly modern one. The nurses were white-robed Magdalens, sixteen in number; and in addition to numerous servants, the staff included a resident apothecary, a barber-surgeon, a curate and a physician.

The physician had to pay a daily visit. He could fix his own time, but the hour had to be a regular one. He ordinarily had anywhere from 150 to 220 patients under his care, sleeping two and three in a bed. The physician was accompanied in his rounds by the barber-surgeon, who jotted down his superior's directions concerning the art of surgery.

François, now, is practising medicine for the first time. He appears to have been successful from the start, since statistics show that the death-rate at the institution dropped, from two to three percent, during his incumbency. And from this day on, there is nothing to show that Rabelais was not always a most excellent physician.

We do not know where François was lodging at this time. A municipal census of three years later (1535) shows him a resident of the rue du Bois. But wherever he resided, he must by now have become thoroughly familiar with the ins and outs of one of the most picturesque and charming cities of France, even though it has always been a busy commercial and industrial centre. For he was a lover of cities, always. He was of that Odyssean race which loves to know the ways of men and towns. He was a frequenter

not merely of highways, but of byways, of streets and lanes and alleys. And that Lyons impressed itself upon him is indicated by the numerous memories of the city in his romance: the "great pillars of Ainay," alluding to the oldest church in the city, that of Saint-Martin-d'Ainay; the stables "at the very top of the house"; the "big cables like those which are manufactured at Tain, for the transporting of salt to Lyons"; the Lyons boatman, in a manner as prominent a species as the Venetian gondolier; etc., etc.

But François' life, his intellectual life, was also going on outside of Lyons; for, while endowed with a physical vitality which he, like Asclepiades, groomed with professional care,—there is no record of illness in his life until the end,—he, yet, never was in the habit of living exclusively where his body chanced to be. It was as if those "animal spirits" of which he is fond of speaking overflowed into the mental realm and kept pushing back the bounds of the latter. He was not, I think, what would be called a pure mental type; but he was the type that makes an excellent doctor: thought with him wore no pale and sickly cast; it was no Hamlet's curse, but merely another and salubrious form of *exercise*. One wonders, a bit mirthfully, what would have been Rabelais' reaction, could he have been brought up against the *maladie du siècle*.

François, then, was a lover not merely of cities, but of continents, and of continents of thought. Instead of going inward and downward, in the direction of the Flowers of Evil and the Là-Bas of a Huysmans and, deeper yet, the modern Freudian-Bergsonian "stream of consciousness,"—instead of this, his mind went embracively outward. He was, we know, acquainted with the geographic expansion of his

age; he had read his cosmography and his geography, and he knew the difference between the two. He must have been a man who loved and caressed a map— Beware the man who does not love a map; in him you'll find reasons that are unreason and the toils of cant.

The intellectual map of Europe at this period was dominated by a few outstanding names and figures: Budé in France, More in England, Reuchlin in Germany and Erasmus of Rotterdam; for the Renaissance had passed on, somewhile since, from the land of its birth. Of these names, Erasmus was perhaps the greatest of them all. It is impossible to picture in a paragraph the sway he exercised over Humanist and advanced thinking generally. And in the mind of Erasmus, François found much that answered to his own mind: the same shyness of mysticism, the same tendency to bring reason into religion, the same hatred of Scholasticism and of dogmatism.

Rabelais, accordingly, must have been elated when he made the acquaintance at Lyons of Hilaire Bertoul (Bertulphus), Erasmus' former secretary and a grammarian of Toulouse, who had come to take up his residence in the city early in the year. Of Bertoul, we know that he was a native of Ghent, that he had been in Erasmus' employ in 1522, before entering that of the Duchesse d'Alençon, and that he died the year following; in a letter of Erasmus' dated August, 1533, we read: "Hilaire Bertoul is dead at Lyons, of the plague, with his wife and his three children." Bertoul also appears as an interlocutor in one of Erasmus' *Colloquies*, where the subject up for discussion is the inns of Lyons as contrasted with those of Germany. We can imagine Hilaire and Dr. François—for the latter almost de-

"Most Humane of Fathers"

(Portrait of Erasmus, to Whom Rabelais Writes: "I Have Called You Father, and I Would Very Willingly Call You Mother." After Holbein)

serves the title by now, though he has not as yet won his hood—taking long and ardent strolls about the outskirts of the city, when hospital duties are not too pressing; and we can hear Bertoul going into ecstatic praises of the great mind he has served, for he seems to have kept in touch with his former employer up to the time of his death.

Bertoul must have spoken of Erasmus' plans for the near future, including a Latin version of the *Jewish Antiquities* of Flavius Josephus. But there was one thing the Sage of Rotterdam needed, and that was a manuscript of the Greek text of Josephus. He had endeavoured in vain to procure one from Jean de Pins, Bishop of Rieux, a Humanist of Toulouse. Now, Jean de Pins had an intimate disciple in Georges d'Armagnac, Bishop of Rodéz; and François had made the acquaintance of both at Toulouse, during his university wander-years. D'Armagnac possessed a Josephus manuscript, and this Rabelais knew. The latter may have requested his bishop friend to permit him to forward the manuscript to Erasmus, or D'Armagnac himself may have suggested it, as he likely did, upon hearing of Erasmus' need. The manuscript in question was, it seems, not the *Antiquities*, but the *Jewish War;* and when Erasmus' edition of Josephus came out three years later (1535), we find in his preface the following statement: "We have been forced to collate the *Antiquities* upon the old Latin texts, from want of Greek. . . . As for the seven books of the *Jewish War*, we have relied upon two Greek manuscripts which have been lent to us, one by Georges d'Armagnac, the eminent Bishop of Rodéz, the other by the very learned Crotus."

The forwarding of the manuscript afforded François an opportunity. As in the case of Budé, more than ten years

before, he would write to the great man. Write he did, and his letter has come down to us, though for a long time, down to very recent years, a mystifying superscription (the "*Bernardo Salignaco*") kept Rabelais experts in the dark as to the real addressee of the letter. This communication is a document of the highest order, biographically, being the deeply sincere expression of a deeply felt spiritual debt. Incidentally, the conclusion of it throws a direct light on Rabelais' religious convictions at this period; at least, it shows that he was not, whatever else he may have been, an "atheist." Before quoting the letter in full, for it is worth quoting, while the last two paragraphs must almost necessarily be quoted if we are to see what Rabelais' religious views were, it may be well to give the setting.

We have seen that, at Agen, François had probably made the acquaintance of Julius Cæsar Scaliger. Scaliger, Erasmus and others were involved in a literary controversy which was then raging, known as the *Ciceronianus* dispute; and the year before, in 1531, Erasmus had been made the target of a rather violent pamplet on the part of Scaliger, an attack which Erasmus ascribed not to Scaliger, but to Jérôme Aléandre, who happened to be, in addition to a Hellenist, a cardinal archbishop, papal nuncio and rector of the University of Paris. In other words, Erasmus was convinced that this was a veiled attack from the higher-ups, and that Scaliger was being employed as a blind. And so, François takes occasion to supply his distinguished correspondent with some information which he thinks may be of value concerning this same Scaliger. His letter, rendered from the Latin, reads:

Georges d'Armagnac, the most illustrious Bishop of Rodéz, recently sent me the Jewish history of Flavius Josephus, requesting me in the name of our very old friendship that if, by any chance, I came upon a man worthy of confidence who was leaving for there, I should take the first opportunity of forwarding it to you.

That is why it is, most humane of fathers, that I am as it were taking time by the forelock, and am seizing upon this opportunity of letting you know the willingness of heart and the filial piety which I have for you. I have called you father, and I would very willingly call you mother, if you would be indulgent enough to permit it; for just as we daily behold pregnant women nourishing children whom they have never seen as yet, protecting them from all surrounding harm, so you, without having seen my face, without my name being known to you, have still, uninterruptedly, reared and nourished me on your own most chaste breasts of divine doctrine. Accordingly, if I did not make some small repayment to you, to whom I owe all that I am and all that I am worth, I should indeed be the most ungrateful of all the men that ever lived.

Hence it is, I salute you again, most amiable of fathers, the father and the ornament of his country, the protector of letters, and the quite invincible defender of the truth. I have lately learned from Hilaire Bertoul, with whom I live on terms of great familiarity, that you are preparing something in the way of an answer to the slanders of Jérôme Aléandre, which you suspect to have been leveled at you under the fictitious mask of a Scaliger. On this point, I cannot bear that your mind should remain any longer in sus-

pense, or that you should any longer be in doubt about the matter.

This Scaliger is from Verona, of that exiled family of Scaligers, and an exile himself. And now, this fellow, whom I know well enough, but whom, by Jove! I do not respect for his learning, is playing the physician at Agen. He is a slanderer who, when all is said, is not so ignorant on the score of medicine, but who, so far as anything else is concerned, is as godless (atheos) *a scamp as ever was. I have not yet been able to lay eyes on his book, since for some months past no copies of it have been brought down this way, which makes me think that it may have been suppressed by those who, at Paris, would wish you well. See to it that you keep in good health, and live happily.*

Lyons, 30th. November, 1532.

François Rabelais, *physician*

In speaking of Scaliger's "godlessness," Rabelais lapses from Latin into Greek, probably for the reason that the matter is a delicate one, and while every monk knew Latin, very few could read Greek fluently. The text reads: "*pantos atheos, hos ouk allos popot' oudeis;* and it is on the interpretation of the Greek *atheos* that the meaning of the passage depends. *Atheos* ordinarily means *without god, denying the gods, godless, ungodly.* Such distinguished Rabelaisian editors as M. Burgaud des Marets and M. Marty-Laveaux both read "atheist" for *atheos.* "He accuses him," says the former commentator, "of atheism, which at least shows his personal antipathy for atheists." Out of a desire to lean backward, since I myself feel certain that Rabelais was not an atheist, I have deliberately selected the weaker

meaning in my translation above. One may, conceivably, call someone a godless scamp or a god-forsaken rascal and still be an atheist one's self. Nevertheless, the word *atheos* in the language of the time was not one lightly bandied about. It was something like certain syllables which, in our Wild West, are supposed to call for gun-play; it had a very literal content: when one said *atheos*, one usually meant "atheistic" and not "godless" or "god-forsaken." We must, then, agree with M. des Marets that Rabelais is exhibiting, at the mature age of thirty-six, an antipathy for the breed; or else, we must say that François is a hypocritical fawner, hurling names which he thinks will find favour with his correspondent.

When he calls Scaliger a "slanderer," Maître François likewise falls back upon the Greek, his word being *diabolos*. The allusion to the "suppression" at Paris of the Scaliger-Aléandre tract probably means that Erasmus' Parisian friends had bought up and burned the edition. François, it is to be noticed, signs himself with a flourish: "François Rabelais, physician," a signature which was to become a favourite one with him.

II

Reflecting that an endless number of scandals are being caused by a lot of Prognostications coming out of Louvain, Prognostications framed in the shadow of a wine-glass, I have here proceeded to get up for you one of the surest and truest that ever was as you will find by experience.

Despite his professional duties, despite his two hundred three-abed patients and his daily rounds with the barber-

surgeon, Maître François still found time to keep up his relations with the printers and the book trade. He is still bent, apparently, upon eking out his income by achieving a popular literary success; for early in January, 1533, we find on sale at Lyons a work entitled *The Pantagrueline Prognostication*, bearing Rabelais' anagram, Alcofribas Nasier, and an *Almanac for the Year 1533, Calculated upon the Meridian of the Worthy City of Lyons and for the Climate of the Kingdom of France, Composed by Me, François Rabelais, Doctor of Medicine and Professor of Astrology, Etc.*

These almanacs and "prognostications," giving political as well as meteorological predictions, enjoyed a great vogue, as did the parodies of them which were composed by the facetious. The parodies were, it is possible, even more popular than the originals, since the science of astrology, thanks to Humanist agitation, was fast losing its repute, even with the populace. As an almanac-parodist, Rabelais had had a number of predecessors, both in French and German, and one of them, Joachim Sterk van Ringelbergh, in Latin Fortius Ringelbergius, had just achieved a neat little success under the Maître's very nose by publishing, through Sébastien Gryphe, a sort of popular encyclopædia—popular, in spite of the fact that it was written in Latin. This Van Ringelbergh, a Hellenist from Antwerp, had taken up his residence at Lyons in 1529, and François no doubt knew the author, as well as his work. It was Ringelbergh's success which led the Hôtel-Dieu physician to leave off his medical studies long enough to try his hand at rivalling the city of Louvain, which was famous for its production of almanacs. The *Pantagruel* must have been selling well, or ex-

pected to sell well, since Rabelais for his *Prognostication* retains the "Alcofribas Nasier" which had appeared on the title-page of the former work. He could not well make use of the same signature on his *Almanac*, which came out at the same time as the *Prognostication;* so he there boldly appropriates the title which he has not as yet earned, that of "Doctor of Medicine."

Maître François' approach to astrology and astrologizings may be seen from the opening paragraph of the fragment which we possess of the *Almanac for the Year 1533.* (We possess no more than fragments of any of Rabelais' Almanacs, so titled, and of some of them no more than the titles.)

So far as I can see, Astrological Prognostications are looked down upon by all men of learning, both on account of the silliness of those who have dealt with the subject, and on account of the failure each year of promises so made to come true. I shall, therefore, for the time being, refrain from telling you what I have found in the calculations of Cl. Ptolomaeus, etc., etc.

We have here the enlightened man of learning speaking, who knows that while there may be a science of astronomy, there is nothing in that old mediæval superstition, astrology. He then goes on to strike what is, decidedly, a religious (Protestant) note, or else Rabelais is once more the grinning hypocrite:

But all these are secrets of the Eternal King's privy Council, since it is He who moderates, according to His goodwill and pleasure, all that is or that comes to pass.

Accordingly, it would be better to keep still and to adore Him in silence, as is directed in the twelfth chapter of Tobit. *The King's secrets should be kept secret. And the Prophet David, in the sixty-fourth* Psalm, *according to the Chaldaic text, says:* Lord, God, silence waiteth for Thee in Sion. *And He gives us the reason in the seventeenth* Psalm: He made darkness His secret place.

In any case, it is proper for us to be humble, and to beseech Him, as Jesus Christ, our Lord, has taught us. Let not that which we wish and ask be done, but that which He wills, and which He had willed before the heavens were created. Only see to it that, everywhere and in all things, His glorious Name be hallowed. Let us draw the veil over what is written in His everlasting Diary, things which it is not permitted mortal man to know or to discuss, as we are told in Acts I. *It is not for you to know the time and seasons which lie within the Father's power. The penalty for such temerity is set forth by the wise Solomon, in the twenty-fifth chapter of* Proverbs: He who searches out His majesty shall be overwhelmed by the same, etc. . . .

Either this is a Calvinistic note (cf. the doctrine of foreordination), or I am very much mistaken.

The *Pantagrueline Prognostication* makes much lighter reading; indeed, it makes very easy reading, on the whole. While it is not up to the *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, it is a work which the ordinary English reader who cares for Rabelais' romance ought to find some little pleasure in perusing, though it is not commonly available to him. After observing that "there can be no doubt that it is no light sin to lie and to abuse the confidence of poor folks who are curious

about finding out new things," the author goes on to pay a tribute to one of his race's most prominent characteristics:

For the French, from as far back as any one can remember, have always had plenty of curiosity of this sort, as Cæsar tells us in his Commentaries, *as well as Jean Gravot in his* Gallic Mythology. *One may see this any day in France, where the first questions put to newly arrived strangers are:* What's the news? Do you know anything new? What's the good word? What are folks talking about? *And they are so very keen about this sort of thing that they frequently become put out with those who come from foreign countries without bringing a whole bagful of news back with them; and they commonly call such ones booby-calves and ninnies.*

Maître François then jocularly suggests that there ought to be some such thing as a censorship of news: "Don't you think it might be a wise thing to station some good trusty hired men at the frontiers of the Realm, to do nothing else except examine the news that is brought in and find out if it is true or not? I certainly think, that might not be a bad idea." The first chapter of the *Prognostication* contains a religious or mock-religious passage similar to that quoted above, with the assurance that there will not "for this year, be any other governor for all the universe than God, the Creator," etc., along with a facetiously familiar reference to "that evangelic ballyhoo (*trompette evangelicque*), Mgr. S. Paul." St. Paul again, the patron of Protestantism.

Here is a fair sample of the style of the *Prognostication:*

This year, crabs will go sideways and ropemakers back-

wards; stools will climb up on benches, spits on the andirons, and hats on heads. . . . fleas will be black for the most part, and bacon will avoid peas in Lent. The belly will go first, while the rump will be the first to sit down, and you won't be able to find a bean in the King's cake or an ace in the deck. As for the dice, they won't say what you want 'em to, no matter how hard you coax 'em, and luck won't always come your way.

The blind this year will see very little, and the deaf will have trouble enough trying to hear, while the dumb will not have a great deal to say. The rich will be a little better off than the poor, and the healthy will feel a little better than the sick. A number of Sheep, Bulls, Pigs, Goslings, Hens and Ducks will die, while the death-rate will not be quite so heavy among the monkeys and dromedaries. Old age will be incurable this year, on account of years past. Those afflicted with pleurisy will have many pains in the side. . . . Eye-trouble will be a great impediment to vision, and ears will be shorter and rarer than usual in Gascony.

The humour is a healthy popular brand, not like our modern, perverted and psychopathic, vaudeville gag,—more like our old burlesques, or a shade above that of the contemporary column-conductor.

François, in the interim, is still holding down his job. On February 15, we find him drawing his first quarter's pay, amounting to ten pounds, at the Hôtel-Dieu.

In May, there occurred one of those events which tended to make Lyons so brilliant a social and literary centre, and that was the visit of the court. The occasion was the marriage of the Dauphin, afterwards Henry II., to Catherine

de' Medici of Florence; in connection with the royal wedding, Francis I. and his court came to Lyons for the last weeks of May and the month of June. With the court came carnival, and Lyons, noted for its fêtes, put on its gayest attire for the King and Queen and the noble ladies of France and Spain. One of Rabelais' friends, Hubert Sussannée, gives us, in one of his epistles, a list of the persons whom he met in Lyons at this time; the list includes Rabelais, Barthélemy Aneau and Salmon Macrin. We learn from another source that among the other artistic lights present were the poet, Jean Second, Hilaire Bertoul and a painter of Lyons by the name of Corneille (Cornelius). Aneau (Annulus) was a Hellenist and a teacher of rhetoric, then engaged in completing Marot's translation of Ovid. As for Salmon Macrin (Saumon Meigret or Salmonius Macrinus), he was a Humanist and royal tutor and the author of two collections of *Carmina*, published in 1528 and 1530. Four years later, in 1537, he was to write a Latin ode to Maître François, "most skilled of physicians" (*medicus peritissimus*). It was at this time, also, that Rabelais met the favoured court poet, Mellin de Saint-Gelais, from whose works he was to borrow, boldly and bodily, in his *Gargantua* (see the "Antidoted Gewgaws" in the second chapter, and the "Enigma in the Form of a Prophecy" at the end of the book, the latter being almost wholly Saint-Gelais'). In short, François at this period was in as brilliant a milieu as any to be found in all France, as brilliant as any in all Europe, perhaps; and he was meeting not only the men of letters of the kingdom, but the men of rank and power, as well, those who, in later years, might be able to "do him good."

This was in the early summer. And then, on October 23, came an autumnal cloud. The Sorbonne swooped down on the *Pantagruel*, as being—the censor's old excuse!—"obscene." The *Pantagruel* was not the only one that suffered; two other works, the *Miroir de l'Ame Pécheresse* of Marguerite and one entitled the *Forest d'Amours*, were condemned at the same time. The suppression of the *Ame Pécheresse*, of course, involved church and state politics; and one of the censors, Le Clerc, asserted when questioned that the royal work had not been condemned outright, but had merely been set aside for further inspection; as for the *Pantagruel* and the *Forest d'Amours* and other works "of that stamp," they were simply "obscene," and that ended the matter.

Maître François' career down the centuries had begun. He "smelled a long way off."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SCIATICA AND THE HOLY CITY

The thing which I had desired most, ever since my first acquaintance with belles-lettres, was to travel through Italy and visit Rome, the capital of the world. You, by a wonderful benevolence, furnished me with the means, by taking me not only to visit Italy (which was in itself something for which I should be grateful), but to visit it with you, who are the most learned and the most polished of men, which last to me has been a favour of inestimable value.

DEDICATION TO: TOPOGRAPHIA ANTIQUAE ROMAE

I

IT is a particularly trite truth, and one discovered by the romancer to his own profit some centuries ago, that world events have a weird habit of reaching out and touching the lives of individuals, lending colour to, altering and shaping the obscurer destiny. Take Rabelais' case: Bluff Hal and his inconvenient passion for the bouncing Anne; the exigencies of French shipping; and a distinguished French prelate and diplomat who suffered severely from the sciatica: these were to exercise a profound and determining influence over Maître François' career.

In the first place, Francis in his struggle with Charles V.

desired above all things to gain the goodwill of Henry VIII. But Hal, unable to procure in due form a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, had become a schismatic; and as a consequence, he had been excommunicated, and his realm had been placed under an interdict. This was where the shoe pinched France: French commerce suffered. Now, the French envoy to the court of Henry was Jean du Bellay, Bishop of Paris, and it was Du Bellay's task, in large part, to win the English monarch over. Du Bellay was nothing if not a good diplomat; among other things, he had done his best to get the Sorbonne to approve Henry's conduct. And now, he was en route to Rome on another highly important mission, which still concerned Henry and his divorce and French commerce and the papal interdict. In going to Rome, he naturally passed through Lyons, that crossroads of Europe. But the bishop had a very bad case of sciatica, so bad that he could barely endure being carried in a litter. In the course of his stop-over at Lyons, his two protégés, Sussannée and Macrin, introduced him to Rabelais. Not only that, but he heard a great deal around the town about the professional skill of the Hôtel-Dieu physician. Would Maître François take a few months' leave of absence and accompany him to Italy? Maître François would, and did. And thus opened another chapter in our subject's life, and a not unimportant chapter it was, as will be seen.

On the eve of his departure for Italy, January 17, 1534, François draws twenty-seven pounds in money of Tours (the Tours pound was worth about ten pence in British currency) on account of the forty pounds due him as Hôtel-Dieu physician from January 31, 1533, to January 31, 1534. He draws his money, and he is off. The bachelor of

medicine from Montpellier, who had left his university to come to Lyons, read proof and write romances, and whose doctor's bonnet is scarcely in sight as yet, is now embarked on another adventure. The adventurous element should not be made too much of. Academic and other life in the sixteenth century ran in a less rigid mould than it does today. There was, however, in Rabelais' character an undoubted tendency to take what came along and profit by the chance which offered, an inclination which, with an instinct to play safe, always, in the matter of patrons and protectors, produces a mildly curious combination. Maître François might have applied to himself the words of Slapdash (Spadassin) and Echephron at Picrochole's celebrated conference, words lifted from the mediæval *Dialogues de Salomon et Marcoul*, a work which has been previously referred to:

> *"Who neither adventures*
> *Horse nor mule,"*
> *Says Solomon—*
>
> *"Who adventures too much*
> *Loses horse and mule,"*
> *Marcoul replied.*

François was not inclined to lose horse and mule. Michelet's remark about the hunted rabbit has been discussed: it is, again, François' animal vitality, overflowing as intellectual curiosity, and his native restlessness that do the hunting.

There is to be, now, more geographic expansion. The travellers doubtless follow the customary route, being guided over the Alps by the "gryffons and mountain-lads (*marrons*) of Savoy." Their passage is by way of Mont Cenis, and by

February 2, they are at Rome. The next two months, from February to April 1, François spends at Rome. Meanwhile, back at Lyons, the unknown physician who took Rabelais' place is drawing the latter's forfeited pay, amounting to 11 pounds, 5 sous.

As the Maître himself tells us, this Italian trip was the fulfilling of a dream which had been his "ever since my first acquaintance with belles-lettres." He probably long had planned to get to Rome some day, somehow, and had very clear in his mind what he would do when he got there. The invitation from Du Bellay came suddenly, and François must at once have started rummaging his brain for those projects which he had been forming over a period of years. That he went to Rome with certain very definite ideas, he tells us in so many words in the dedication to the work which he published immediately upon his return, the *Topographia Antiquae Romae* of Marliani:

A good while before we came to Rome, I had formed in my mind a conception of those things which I was drawn there by a desire to see. In the first place, I was resolved to visit those learned men of repute in the places through which we passed, to get into familiar conversation with them, and to hear what they had to say concerning certain pressing problems which had long been troubling me.

After that (for this was in line with my calling), I desired to see the plants, the animals and certain medicaments which, I was told, were lacking in France, but which were to be found down there in abundance.

Finally, I promised myself that I would set down the aspects of the city, making use of my pen as of a pencil, in

order that, upon my return, there might be nothing that I should not be able to bring forth from among my papers and show to my fellow townsmen.

I had brought with me a mass of notes on the subject, taken from various Greek and Latin authors. On the first head, I did not succeed so badly, though not at all according to my expectations. As for the plants and animals, Italy does not possess any which I had not already seen and known beforehand. I saw a plane-tree, a single one, at the grotto of Diana Arcina. As for the last point, I was so diligent on that score that no one, I believe, knew his own house better than I knew Rome, and all the byways of Rome.

François, then, is interested first of all in finding out "what learned gentry" there are in the city, any city through which he may pass (he says nothing about investigating "the kind of wine drunk there"). One is reminded here of Thaumast, the Englishman, who visits Pantagruel, in Book Second, Chapter XVIII. Also, of the young Gargantua who, after his reformation at the hands of Ponocrates, before going to bed, would sometimes "go to call on learned men, or those who had travelled in strange lands." Like most trips of the sort, long dreamed of and planned without the data of fact, Rabelais' first Italian visit—he is to make a number of others—appears to have proved something of a disappointment in those respects in which he had counted on it, while on the other hand, there were compensations for which he had not looked.

The learned gentry, for one thing, were not as plenteous as he had expected. He met Nicolas Raince, who had been

for nearly a score of years an attaché of the French embassy, and who knew Rome better than a book. He met the ambassador himself, Charles Hémard de Denonville, Bishop of Mâcon, Jean Sevin, another attaché, André Cave, the apostolic bullist, Jean Lunel, Abbot of Saint-Sebastien-hors-les-Murs, whose name facetiously appears on the title-page of the second edition of the *Pantagruel;* and it is possible that he met "our good friend Lascaris," who some three years before had changed his residence from Paris to Rome. Not a highly inspiriting adventure on the personal side, one must say, Lascaris apart. What he ran into, in short, was the little French colony of diplomats, and diplomats in those days were usually ecclesiastics; Rabelais is still keeping company with the cloth. Raince, likely, served him in the best stead of all; he had been Marliani's guide at Rome, and it is probable that he performed the same service for François.

If the personal contacts which the latter established at this time were not so thrilling intellectually, they were extremely valuable ones from the worldly point of view. Du Bellay himself was to be a friend, patron and protector for life. There can be no doubt that this friendship was a very real one; Du Bellay not only appreciated Rabelais' medical skill, but found his company enchanting, while the Maître had a deeply rooted respect for his employer and the latter's abilities. A friendship equally deep and sincere was the one which François formed with the prelate's brother, Guillaume du Bellay, Sieur de Langey.

Maître François' second objective is professional, or semi-professional: plants, animals and medicaments. Rabelais was an ardent botanist, but he missed out on his Italian

trip, chiefly for the reason that while there were a number of noted botanical gardens in Italy, they did not happen to lie along his route. The plane-tree was one of the novelties which he wished and expected to see; he saw one. As to animals, Filippo Strozzi had a famous menagerie at Florence, noted in particular for its "*africanae*" or tigers; but for one reason or another, it is doubtful if François saw it.

As a topographer, he fared somewhat better, though when it came to doing a book on the subject, he was anticipated by Marliani. Here, Rabelais' phrase, "making use of my pen as of a pencil," is to be noted. Was he an amateur graphic artist? A spurious collection of drawings, the *Songes Drolatiques* (Droll Dreams of Pantagruel), has been attributed to him. The original is: "*calamo perinde ac pencillo depingere*," which Lacroix and other French translators render as "of my pen *and* pencil"; but as M. des Marets points out, the Latin does not admit of this interpretation.

François gives us, in his Marliani dedication, an account of how he set to work:

Having erected a gnomon like that of Thales of Miletus, I divided the city into quarters, with the aid of a transverse line drawn from east to west and from south to north, endeavouring to reproduce these quarters visually. As for him (*Marliani*), *he preferred to take his plan from the hills.*

Rabelais' Roman explorations were conducted in the company of two friends, members of the Du Bellay household, Nicolas Leroy and Claude Chappuis. The former was a jurist, in close touch with Calvin's friends at Orléans; the latter was a poet and librarian to Francis I., as well as being Du Bellay's confidential man.

The prelate himself, in his odd moments, seems to have taken a hand in archæological research, which was a fad with the population of Rome, from the popes down. It was the custom to buy up plots of ground and start excavating for friezes, capitals, cornices or whatever might turn up; Du Bellay did this, but had no luck.

And then, François finds that his topographical labours and researches are all for nothing:

Things were going along very nicely, when, lo and behold! I got wind of Marliani's book. I felt a joy over it similar to that which Juno Lucina experienced, when she appeared to those who were in difficult childbed. I, of course, had conceived the same child; but I had suffered to the bottom of my soul in bringing it into the world. For while the subject in itself did not call for any terrifically hard thought, it did not impress me as being particularly easy to undertake to digest an impressive and formless mass of material, and to bring it into some sort of clarity and respectable order.

While Rabelais was busied with these pursuits, Du Bellay was occupied with his grave international mission. The confidential position which François held in the Du Bellay household is indicated by his familiarity with what was going on politically, and by the fact that, as he tells us, he was present when Du Bellay made his plea in behalf of Henry to Pope Clement VII. He pays a high and even fulsome compliment to his employer's entrancing eloquence and polished Latinity. None the less, that eloquence and that Latinity proved vain. The mission was a flat failure, and on the first of April, Du Bellay sets out to return to France,

making the journey by short stages, no doubt due to the state of his health. By May 18, Du Bellay himself is back in Paris, while by August 1, Rabelais has resumed his duties at the Hôtel-Dieu in Lyons and is drawing six months and a half's pay, though it is duly noted in the *Comptes* that he is not entitled to so much—he needed the money; it was a habit which was to grow on him, though he was never the spendthrift nor the beggar which some would make him out to have been.

On the last day of August, François signs the dedication to the Lyons edition of the Marliani, explaining the circumstances of the book's publication in France. The dedication is, appropriately, to Du Bellay.

The unfortunate circumstance was that, called back by the imperious voice of prince and fatherland, you had to leave before the book was finished. However, I took care that as soon as it was published, it should be sent to Lyons (which is the seat of my studies). This was done through the care and diligence of Jean Sevin, a man truly fitted for any task; but I am unable to explain to you how it was the book happened to be sent on without any dedication. In order that it might not be published deformed and headless as it was, it seemed only proper for me to bring it out under the auspices of your most distinguished name.

II

It was probably on the return from this first Italian trip that Rabelais' stop-over in Florence occurred, which most biographers would assign to a later date. The evidence need not be gone into here; it will be sufficient to state that the

best authorities, such as M. Clouzot and M. Plattard, assign the Florence visit to the 1534 return journey.

In the eleventh chapter of his Fourth Book, Rabelais has given us a reflection of his stay in the city of the Medici:

You remind me of what I once saw and heard in Florence, it must be going on twenty years ago.

A number of us were at a party, and we were all studious chaps, lovers of the curious and anxious to make the acquaintance of learned men and to become familiar with the antiquities and special features of Italy. We were speaking, as it happened, of the beauties of Florence, of its cathedral, its sumptuous temples and its magnificent palaces; and we were trying, it seemed, who could outdo the others in properly praising all of these, when a monk of Amiens, one Bernard Bacon (Bernard Lardon) *by name, spoke up in some perplexity and irritation:*

"I'm sure I don't know what the devil you fellows find here to rave so much about. I've seen all these sights, the same as you, and I'm no more blind than the rest of you. What's it all about? Some pretty buildings, that's all. But God and Monsieur St. Bernard, our patron, save us, in all this city I have yet to see a single bakeshop, and I've looked very carefully, I can assure you—like a spy, to right and left, ready to count any baking bakeries that I might find, and make a note of what side of the street they were on.

"Now in Amiens, without walking a third or even a fourth as far as I have here in my search, I could show you more than fourteen ancient and aromaticizing bakeries. I can't say what pleasure you may have taken in viewing, down by the belfry, the lions and other africanae, *which is,*

I think, the name you give to what are called tigers, or how much you may have enjoyed seeing the porcupines and ostriches in the palace of Lord Philip Strozzi. But 'pon my word, sonny-boys, I for my part would much rather see one nice fat goose on the spit. These porphyries, these marbles, are all very fine in their way; I'm not saying anything at all against them. But Amiens tarts are more to my taste.

"None Knew His Own House Better"
(*Map of Rome in the Sixteenth Century. From the Cosmographia of Sebastien Münster*)

These old statues are all right enough, so far as they go; I'm quite willing to believe that; but by St. Ferréol of Abbeville, the young flappers (bachelettes) *of our country are a thousand times more up-and-coming.*"

This passage, more than once, has been quoted and held

against Rabelais. It does sound a good deal like the Innocents Abroad. But there is no occasion for identifying the author with his Bernard Bacon and the latter's Amiens tarts, his "nice fat goose on a spit" and his up-and-coming *bachelettes*. Maître François may be having sport with an insensitive companion, a type to be found in every land and at almost any gathering—the America-is-the-proper-place-for-Americans type. On the other hand, that "lovers of the curious" paragraph—the English does not begin to get the content of the French, *amateurs de peregrinité*—sounds like the enthusiasm of a first experience, an initial contact and one that had left a lasting impression.

To judge from this passage, François had seen the Strozzi menagerie, but this is contradicted by his statement in the Marliani dedication, to the effect that he saw in Italy no plants or animals "which I had not already seen and known," and it was in this very year, 1534, that the first lions and tigers were sent by the Sultan Barbarossa to Francis I.'s Fontainebleau collection. The very word, tiger, had not as yet become acclimated, "*africanae*" being the more usual term. But if Rabelais did not see the ostriches, the porcupines and the tigers, he must have seen other marvels at the house of Strozzi. The Florentine banker, who maintained a branch establishment at Lyons, was then the richest in the world, after the Fuggers of Augsburg.

Rabelais has been portrayed as lacking in artistic, in æsthetic sensitiveness, as he assuredly is lacking in a feeling for the mystic and, some would say (among them M. Lanson) in a sense of beauty and of poetry. He says nothing, for example, about the great art, the great painting and the great sculpture of the Italy of the Renaissance.

"The stay at Rome," observes M. Clouzot, "covered two months, February and March, 1534. One may imagine from the impressions which the Renaissance Humanists, Montaigne for instance, have left us, that ancient Rome should have given Rabelais a profound emotion. But a strange thing it is! This first visit, like the following ones, has left in his writings infinitely fewer traces, of a certainty, than have the details of manners or the tales of little local quarrels which he has picked up in his native Chinon valley. All that he has to tell us about it is contained in two or three pages of a Latin epistle."

The tone of that epistle, too, it may be added, sounds a trifle perfunctory. But the Maître has his apologists. M. Plattard calls attention to his fondness for and intimate knowledge of architecture. He was apparently on speaking terms with the two standard architectural treatises of the time, the *De Re Aedificatoria* of Leone Battista Alberti and the *De Architectura* of Vitruvius. His acquaintance with Italian architecture was to show up later in his work, and he was the first French writer to employ a number of terms which have since become a part of the language.

Rabelais has often been termed an "enigma." An enigma he was, in more ways than one. A literary enigma, among the rest. The gaps and omissions in his work, the things one would expect to find there and does not, are numerous and inexplicable; they are quite as startling as the things one does not look to find, but does find. When all is considered, one is inclined to agree with M. Clouzot: the first great writer of French prose was decidedly more impressed by the "cow country" of his infancy than he was with Rome and its eternal hills.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

"MY OWN COW COUNTRY"

A DYNASTY OF BELLIES

It is by his (Pantagruel's) leave that I am about to visit my own cow country, to find out if any of my folks are still alive.

PROLOGUE TO BOOK SECOND

And Rabelais enthrones a dynasty of bellies: Grandgousier, Pantagruel, Gargantua. Rabelais is the Aeschylus of grub, which is a great thing, when one reflects that to eat is to devour.

VICTOR HUGO

AFTER he had completed his *Pantagruel* and handed it in to his printer, Claude Nourry, Maître François had taken time out to go back and visit his native Chinon region. His appointment as Hôtel-Dieu physician was probably already in sight, and a job as always meant a certain confinement. It is readily understandable that, having published his Manardi and his Hippocrates and Galen, having put the finishing touches to his romance, and with his *Lucii Cuspidii Testamentum* ready for the press (the dedication bears the date of September 4), he should have felt the need of a change of scene; and this was as good a time as any to take a vacation, when the vintage was being gathered in Touraine, with the accompanying bustle and festivity.

Life in a wine-growing country at such a season holds a vinous flavour, and the "Septembral juice" is more than likely to jumble, but very pleasantly so, the stops of the brain. Since the *Pantagruel*, in order to be published as it was at the autumn fair, had to be in the printer's hands by August, we may assign François' Chinon visit to the latter part of that month and the month following (remembering that his Cuspidius dedication is dated from Lyons). And so, after trailing his dusty feet through the August fair, and with the talk of that marvellous new *roman*, the *Grandes Cronicques*, still ringing in his ears, François packed his bag and was off, "to see if any of my folks are still alive."

For he had reached that age when a man, at the maturity of his powers and with his real achievements, his real work to do still before him, sometimes experiences a curious transient touch of what the Freudians babble of as "infantile retrogression," a backward-creeping instinct in the direction of the Old Oaken Bucket, and beyond the Old Oaken Bucket, the generative matrix. It is but a touch, a shadow, a fleck of that second childhood which is to come. A man puffs out his lungs, fondles his mental muscles, and then: "Well, by the way, I wonder what the folks back home are doing all this while?"

Rabelais' father had reached the pinnacle of a small-town success. Had he not, for some months, held down the King's bench at Chinon? Some two years later, he was to die, and his piepowdered son with a monk's frock that had left much wool on the bushes behind it was not to share in his will—some say, for the reason that, being a member of a religious order, Maître François was "legally dead" (*mort civile-*

ment). How did father and son hit it off? As to that, we can only speculate. Antoine Rabelais, to have held the position he did, even for a brief period, must have been an educated man and an able one in his calling. His son was—what? A monk leading an irregular life, from the Church's point of view; one who had got himself into a scrape over his predilection for Greek books, who had laid aside the ecclesiastic garment he should have been wearing, and who "*per sæculum vagatus fuit*," as the expressive but not easily translatable Latin has it, in the Prayer which François was later to address to the Holy Father. This son, moreover, did not seem to know his own mind any too well; he had dabbled in the law and in medicine, and having finally decided to become a physician and gone so far as to obtain his baccalaureate, had become a printer's man and a writer of romances. It was enough to puzzle the best-intentioned of fathers.

Something depended, one would say, on the amount of humour as well as insight which Antoine Rabelais possessed. Antoine was a small-town lawyer; his son was a Humanist —ah! that accounted for much. Going home in those days and speaking to a straight-going father of the new *litterae humaniores* was something like coming home from one's freshman year in college and quoting from the Third International. The "contagion of Greek," the "revolt of the intellect," etc. But was Antoine Rabelais the ordinary father? I do not believe so. We know almost nothing about him, except whom it was he married, the names of his children, his property-holdings, the division of his property, a glimpse of his professional career. He remains as shadowy, almost, as a yellowing notary's document. He would be a

shadow, if it were not that we are able to reconstruct him in the person of his son's artistic creation, Gargantua.

One of the deepest and most vivid impressions, it seems, that François derived from this "*païs de vache*" visit of his was the contrast, that gentle rubbing, of generations, which is a mellowing and a maturing experience when the rubbing does not become friction and the contrast turn to conflict. There can be no doubt that, in that "dynasty of bellies," Grandgousier, Gargantua, Pantagruel, we have three distinct and successive generations set off one against another. Grandgousier is the grandfatherly generation which immediately preceded the dawning of the New Light; in his day, the shades of "Gothic" darkness still lay upon the land, and he will, accordingly, be found taking an elder and conservative view, as in the notable controversy over the length of Friar John's nose (Book First, Chapter XL.):

"*Why is it,*" *inquired Gargantua,* "*that Friar John has such a fine nose?*"

"*For the reason,*" *replied Grandgousier,* "*that God willed it so, who shapes us in such and such a fashion, to such and such an end, as a potter does his clay.*"

And then, a flippancy from the Younger Generation:

"*For the reason,*" *said Ponocrates,* "*that he happened to be the first at the nose-fair. He took the largest and the handsomest there was.*"

As for Gargantua, he is the generation that came with the first stirrings of the Renaissance, but too late to take advantage of the New Learning; read his regrets in the letter to Pantagruel, Book Second, Chapter VIII. Pantag-

ruel is Rabelais' own generation; he is an enlightened prince of the Renaissance. And from the manner in which the Maître treats his three principal characters, we may deduce—being aware as we are of his fundamental realism, above all in the *Gargantua*—the nature of his own family relations. This does not mean that we are to assume that Gargantua is, in every respect, Antoine Rabelais, and that Grandgousier is an utterly realistic portrait of François' grandfather; the father and the grandfather provided merely the groundwork for the son's creation; and with this reservation in mind, we may study them. Grandgousier and Gargantua are simple souls, in both the complimentary and the uncomplimentary sense of the term. The pious Grandgousier, saved by his very simplicity of soul, is the best type in a rotting world; while Gargantua is redeemed by his love and encouragement of a New Order which he is barely able to comprehend; is it not he who founds the Abbey of Thélème for Friar John? If, then, Rabelais is as realistic here as he uniformly is in the other details of his *Gargantua*, we may be sure that his relations at La Devinière were wholly pleasant ones, even though the Maître does occasionally poke a little sly and good-natured fun at his two elder giants, whose brain-power hardly equals their ventripotence.

It took François from ten to twelve days, no longer than that, to make the Lyons-Chinon trip; for journeys in the sixteenth and seventeenth century were not such formidable affairs as we sometimes think. He arrived in Touraine at the time "when the grasshoppers begin to be a little hoarse," or about the middle of September (after his Cuspidius dedication), according to Professor Lefranc. (This is, perhaps,

the more likely supposition, according better, as it does, with the vintage season.) We do not know if he went at once to the spots which his infancy knew; we do not even know whether there was a deep-tangled wildwood or not; but we do know that the scenes of his childhood, if he did not deliberately revisit them, registered themselves on his mental retina, for we find those scenes being constantly evoked in the course of the *Gargantua*. It is significant that every place mentioned in that book may be located with absolute precision upon the map. For the *Gargantua* is essentially a Chinon, just as the *Pantagruel* is very largely a Parisian journal; in the latter book, Chinon plays little part, while the Parisian scenes in the former cannot compare with those in the preceding book, or with the La Devinière episodes in the same book, in point of vividness. And when we say Chinon, we really mean La Devinière; for the city itself is not important; it is the old Rabelais homestead which holds the centre of the stage, and it was at La Devinière that Grandgousier and Gargantua lived in Maître François' lively imagination. We have a homely and pleasing picture of Grandgousier, the grandfather, in the twenty-eighth chapter:

Let us leave them there now and return to our friend, Gargantua, . . . and to the good old man, Grandgousier, his father, who after supper is warming himself (se chauffe les couiles) *at a great clear fire and, while waiting for the chestnuts to roast, is writing on the hearth with the burnt end of a stick that is used to poke the fire, telling as he does so charming tales of days gone by, for the entertainment of his wife and family.*

Most of Rabelais' commentators seem to have overlooked the fact that Grandgousier and his wife, Gargamelle, are not really gigantesque at all, but quite normal individuals. François renewed relations not only with his immediate family, but with the family's dependents and retainers: with the old family midwife, who, in the *Gargantua*, comes "from Brisepaille, near Saint-Genou"; with Jean Denyau, the family wheelwright, who makes the handsome ox-cart in which they trundle Gargantua about; etc. Did the Maître smack his lips, as he tasted once more the milk from the cows of Brehemont and Pontille, those 17,913 cows "for his ordinary diet"? Did he even stumble across a memento of the vanished years in the form of playthings and childish toys, and was it this that gave him the idea for Gargantua's "fantastic horses"? In short, the windmills of Mirebalais were whirring for him again, as he strolled down to the vineyard that furnished the famous and velvety *vin pineau* of La Devinière—that "Sorbapple Vineyard, above the Hard Walnut," as it is named in Book Third, Chapter XXXII. It is at this same Hard Walnut that Gargantua unnests "your pilgrim gentlemen" whom he has carelessly swallowed in a salad; and it is this same "good white wine" which makes the Drunkards so talkative in that renowned fifth chapter, and which similarly loosens up the tongues at Gargantua's dinner party.

And while speaking of the Drunkards interlude, by way of showing how far the old commentators went astray, with their endless allegorizings and their far-fetched "historical" interpretations, M. Johanneau of the Variorum will tell you that Rabelais, in this chapter, is alluding to "a party staged by Louis XII. and his court in Brittany, on the occasion of

the accouchement of Queen Anne." Nothing of the sort; no necessity for going so far afield as all that. The author is merely describing a neighbourhood party which had occurred in his own home; this is clearly enough indicated by the wine which is drunk there.

II

We have heard, before, of Gaucher de Sainte-Marthe, the doctor and the country squire who was Lawyer Rabelais' rival as the big man of a small town. Antoine Rabelais was the most prominent citizen in the neighbourhood of Seuilly, occupying in that parish much the same position that Sainte-Marthe did in the neighbouring one. The latter was also Seigneur de Chapeau on the Loire, near Saumur; and here, once more, he found a likely unwelcome neighbour in Antoine, who owned the estate of Chavigny-en-Vallée in the parish of Varenne-sur-Loire, opposite the little provincial town of Montsoreau. The rivalry between the two appears to have become particularly intense from about the year 1527 on, or from the time that Antoine Rabelais began to become a local figure of importance. Things were finally brought to a head by Gaucher's fondness for the sport of fishing and fish-raising and a resulting dispute over the rights to the Loire waters.

On their Chapeau estate, the Sainte-Marthes owned the riparian rights for a considerable distance opposite Saumur, and Gaucher had there caused to be constructed a "*duict*" or dam, in the form of a double row of stakes across the river, in order to permit the installation of extensive fisheries. This, with a mill, completed his virtual monopoly of the stream. The new fisheries, as might have been expected,

interfered greatly with the current and seriously threatened river navigation; all of which led to a prolonged and bitter quarrel, ending in parliamentary litigation between Gaucher and his neighbours, the opposition being headed by a confederation of Loire merchants. There had been certain proceedings in 1528, and the year following, the matter had been taken up to Paris. There were a number of long-drawn-out "inquiries" and "investigations," summonses, and the like, just as there would be in a similar case today, and some of the proceedings and citations in connection with the affair make picturesque reading. After a year or two, or about 1530, the first heat of the parties concerned seems to have died down a little, but in the month of September, 1532,—about the 7th., to be exact, or precisely at the time that Rabelais must have been paying his visit or on the verge of doing so,—the merchants proceeded to take the matter up again, with renewed energy; and from that time on, the communal Registre des Comptes is filled with little else than details concerning the progress of the case and the sums paid out for its prosecution. It was obviously one of those affairs in which a whole neighbourhood practically stands upon its ear. The matter was not settled during François' visit, but proceeded to drag on for three or four years, when Gaucher, finding that his opponents too far outnumbered him, to say nothing of the latter's right at law, was forced to give up.

Now, the point of this affair, so far as Rabelais and his *Gargantua* are concerned, is this: the King's Counsel at Chinon at this time, whose duty it naturally was to take charge of proceedings against Sainte-Marthe, was none other than one Jehan Gallet, a close relative of Antoine

Rabelais and the latter's professional associate. There was also a Mathieu Gallet, of the same family, who was a parliamentary clerk; and he, too, had a hand in the thing. It is, therefore, not by chance that Grandgousier and Gargantua's Master of Requests is named Ulrich Gallet, "a man wise and discreet, whose virtue and good sense he had tested under a number of contentious circumstances." (Book First, Chapter XXX.) And it is not unreasonable to assume that these two gentlemen by the name of Gallet, personified in Ulrich, were acting not only for the "common good," but also on behalf of their relatives, the Rabelais'. There was another friend of François' mixed up in the proceedings, and that was Antoine Hullot, the Orléans advocate, to whom the Maître in after years addressed his "Bailiff of Bailiffs" letter.

Rabelais at this time no doubt was casting about for a possible follow-up to his *Pantagruel*. What more natural than that, in the flush of having just completed one book, a beginning writer should at once start thinking of his next? The thing on his mind was the *Grandes Cronicques*: to write a popular success like that. It may be that he had already determined to take up the Gargantua theme, or it may be that it was suggested to him by the course of events. Going back to the country to visit the home folks gives a writer a chance to think; and his thinking is quite apt to be coloured by the surroundings of the moment. This was the case with Rabelais. In the genealogy of his Pantagruel, he had made his giant-hero Gargantua's son; he would now go back and tell the story of the father. The contrast of generations in his own home provided him with a suggestion for his character-drawing. What about

a plot? Old Gaucher and his river-dam and that lawsuit which never seemed to come to an end—how about that? He couldn't quite see— He did see! He saw it all; and the result was, not only the aged Grandgousier warming himself and poking the fire, or Gargantua imbibing the milk from those 17,913 cows,—the result was Picrochole and the Cake-Bakers' War, one of the merriest events in all military history. He would take that whole business of the river-dam and work it into the old romance-of-chivalry framework. Maître François did not know it, but he was doing, had already started doing in his *Pantagruel*, a work which Cervantes and Sancho Panza were to complete at the beginning of the next century. In any event, his new romance, his next book was written!

There is no need here of going into the incidents of the Picrocholine War. That magnificent struggle is known to every reader of Rabelais, being possibly the most familiar portion of all the Maître's work. A comparison of the details of that war with those of the Sainte-Marthe suit leaves not the slightest room for doubt. Take the opening of hostilities, in Chapter XXV., the assault upon Grandgousier's shepherds by the Cake-Bakers of Lerné. The Forgier who is the first casualty has been identified as a member of a family of labourers of Cinais, in which neighbourhood the Rabelais family had holdings; he was, probably, one Jacques Forgier. As for Marquet, who there gets the worst of it, the name was that of Sainte-Marthe's father-in-law; the "Capitol" (*Capitoly*), mentioned at the beginning of the chapter following, is the seignorial château of Lerné, where Sainte-Marthe lived; etc. The identification of Gaucher de Sainte-Marthe as the real-life Picrochole

is not altogether the work of modern scholarship. In a manuscript preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale and dating from the end of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century, the author, who is a scholar of the period, informs us:

Picrochole was Madame de Fontevrault's physician. His name was Scèvole or Gaucher. . . . He lived at Lerné, which is a pleasant village dependency of Fontevrault. Madame had given him this village to hold during his life, as she had in the case of his two predecessors, which is the reason why Rabelais calls him "the third of that name." He was very choleric. In the course of a consultation with Rabelais, who was physician of the Abbey of Seuilly, he struck Rabelais, which was the reason why the latter called him Picrochole, the King of Lerné, third of the name. . . . There was a lawsuit between certain of the Lerné folk and the monks of Seuilly, and the property of the latter was seized, including the abbey-close, which was farmed out somewhile before the vintage season. The tenants tried to take possession, and Friar John opposed them. . . . This was the defence of the close. Marquet (Marquelt) was Picrochole's father-in-law. . . . Gallet was a resident of Lerné. There are still some of that name at Chinon.

What we are to see here is a mingling of fact and legend. Rabelais, so far as the records go, was never physician to the Abbey of Seuilly, though he may have held a consultation with Sainte-Marthe. We also have the statement of Ménage, who, in the *Menagiana*, speaks of having been told by the MM. Sainte-Marthe that Rabelais' Picrochole was their great-uncle Jacques (that is, Gaucher) de Sainte-

Marthe, who was a physician at Fontevrault. And we shall find an echo of this small-town quarrel years later. When, in one of the darkest periods of his life, François is attacked by a "mad-dog" monk, it is Charles de Sainte-Marthe, the graceful court poet and Gaucher's son, who comes to the support of—Rabelais' attacker. Thus did a village dispute over a row of stakes across a river carry over into a wider sphere, the battle of the elders being fought out by the sons.

Professor Lefranc regards Rabelais' Picrocholine War as "a perfect picture of rural manners." He adds:

"Rabelais has here related an adventure which undoubtedly happened at the moment of his arrival in the Chinon country, about the same date of the month of September. Everything inclines us to believe that he had these things at first hand. . . . One feels that here are pages which have been lived, pages reflecting a peasant's dispute that was followed by bloodshed. No slightest detail is invented; it is life itself. . . . Places are referred to with a scrupulous precision. No element of fantasy intervenes, up to the opening of hostilities. . . . It would seem to be beyond all doubt that the incomparable narrative of Chapter XXV. affords us a veracious picture of a fight that occurred between shepherds of the Rabelais family and the inhabitants of Lerné, who were vassals of Sainte-Marthe."

III

The business of writing is an unending struggle between the writer and his material; and it is only when the writer has come in some degree to dominate his material that he may be said to have achieved something like a mastery of

his trade. The material to which François Rabelais first put his hand was that of the old romances of chivalry, then fast sinking into parody. This material was legendary, fantastic and, on the whole, unreal. It was marked frequently by an unimaginative striving for imagination. From the start, François gave it his own imprint; his tendency from the first was to realism. For basically, he was a realist. This statement is not made rashly, but after the study of years. We today may find it a trifle hard at times to make out whether he was a realist or something else, something more,—a Super-realist, if the word means anything. For on the side of language and of style, as of thought and personality, the Maître is an enigma, and one not to be read without that labour which must be brought to the solving of any riddle.

Here, once more, a contemned scholarship may perform its useful chore, an indispensable one in this case, by clearing up not only Rabelais' own period, but the one preceding. When we have made such a study, the thing we see is that Maître François' pecular stylistic superficies—and it goes a good deal deeper than a superficies—is simply the result of that writer's-battle of which we have been speaking, the struggle between the artist and his medium. Having elected a certain form, a certain framework, the problem was, and is, to subdue that form and build upon that framework a living tissue. Rabelais, in other words, was still struggling with the mediæval *fatrasie;* and the struggle was further intensified by the fact that the form he was striving to subdue was a form to his liking—is not that always the artist's hardest task, to refrain from doing, or overdoing, the thing he wants to do and can do? François pos-

sessed an exuberant imaginative vitality and a fund of fantasy of his own; but at the core, he was a realist. He was a realist, in that he needed the prod of reality to goad him on; he needed the soil of reality from which to soar. His *Pantagruel* was inspired by a summer dry-spell; and while he built it into the old romance-of-chivalry skeleton, he proceeded to fill that skeleton with autobiographic incident and the results of personal first-hand observation: his own university wander-years; his Parisian experiences; the pig-Latin-spouting student of the Left Bank; the polyglot and Villonesque *mauvais escholier* of a Panurge; the disputations of the Sorbonnists and the rue du Fouarre; the demoded works of devotion and theology in St. Victor's; a parody of the legal proceedings of his time. Only that portion of the book dealing with the voyage to Utopia is fantastic, and even here there is a sound and solid basis of reality in the geographic explorations of the age.

Even in the seemingly most unrealistic episode of the *Pantagruel*, the Baysecul-Humevesne trial, we find the author working hard to keep the thing a *fatrasie*. In this instance, a comparison of Rabelais' various revisions is of interest; in cases where a passage shows danger of making sense, we find him writing in a word or phrase merely to prevent it from doing so and to keep up the mystification. In this episode, Rabelais is imitating the *coq-à-l'ane*, or cock-and-bull chain, rendered popular by Marot; and we are to remember, also, that mystification was the life of the old French theatre, an example being the farce of *Pathelin*, which the Maître knew so well. The realism, then, it is evident, even in this first work, far outweighs the non- or super-realism.

But in the *Gargantua*, following his Chinon visit, we find François definitely achieving what may be termed a mastery. He is no longer merely a realist by instinct; he knows that he is a realist, and he knows exactly what he is doing with his realistic materials and his non-realistic form.

"One of the most assured results of recent Rabelaisian research," writes Professor Lefranc, "undoubtedly has been the demonstration of the fact that we have in Rabelais the greatest and the most skilled of realists, that is to say, a writer who has loved to seek out and depict the real, or better, life, with an unequalled passion and sustained power. Such a statement may, indeed, seem surprising when applied to a romancer who has been known for his prodigious exuberance. But for some ten years back, the evidence on this head has been piling up, in such a quantity and from so great a variety of sources, that our former conception of Rabelais' place in our literature has been thereby profoundly modified, as has that of the essence of his genius and the idea we are to form of the substance and framework of the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel*."

And again, speaking of the real-life basis of the Picrocholine War:

"We have one proof the more: our author . . . invents nothing out of whole cloth; a memory, a fact, a precise circumstance are at the bottom of his most fantastic conceptions. . . . At every turn, we are enabled to verify this law of his mind, and I feel sure that the longer one examines his work, the more clearly one will see that this is the true explanation of his method of composition. . . . A mirror at once of the author's existence and of his times: these words may serve to define with a just concision the work

of one whom Chateaubriand called the 'creator of French literature.' "

In the course of Rabelais' later work, nothing occurs to cause us to doubt this "*trame réelle*," as Professor Lefranc calls it. In the notes to his Rabelaisian Lexicon, M. Marty-Laveaux has pointed out that the Maître always employs technical words, for example, in their precise technical sense, whereas his immediate successors, the Pléiade group, frequently employ these same words in a figurative sense. It might seem that we have an exception in Rabelais' use of nautical terms, in his description of the storm at sea, in Book Fourth; but as will be seen, this exception does not stand up, and the same is in part true of the "Anatomy of Lentkeeper" in Chapters XXX.–XXXII. of that same book.

Rabelais' problem in the present book was to combine the Chinon incidents with which he was familiar, and of which he had just been a witness, with the Gargantua myth. That myth is an old and an obscure one, being widely spread in France and even in England; and the researches of scholarship have done precious little toward throwing any light on its origins. Exhibiting many variations in folklore, the legend undoubtedly is one going back to the Middle Ages. It may represent the fusion of a number of myths, and it has likely been influenced by early-Christian tradition. In the nineteenth century, an attempt was made to associate it with the Pantophagic (all-devouring) Hercules mythology of the Gauls; but this view has now been generally discredited. Scattered over France are a number of rocks, stones, dolmens and menhirs, megalithic monuments and the like bearing names connected with the giant, such as: Gargantua's finger; Gargantua's tooth; Gargantua's spoon;

Gargantua's skillet; Gargantua's dish; Gargantua's chair; Gargantua's basket; Gargantua's cane; Gargantua's skittle; Gargantua's quoit; Gargantua's ball; Gargantu's shoes; Gargantua's clogs; Gargantua's boots; Gargantua's soup-tureen; Gargantua's spectacles; Gargantua's whetstone; Gargantua's *pierre à pisser;* Gargantua's tomb; etc. There were even the "footprints of Gargantua's horse," and there was a "Gargantua's homestead" on the Côte-d'Or. As for "Gargantua's Chair," it may still be viewed today, at Saint-Pierre de Varangeville; on an old twelfth-century map, it bears the name of "*Curia Gigantis.*" But all these mean nothing, for the reason that it is impossible to determine the dates at which the names they bear were given them.

One difference between the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel* that strikes us at first sight is that, while there are innumerable traces of the Gargantua myth in the popular lore, Pantagruel remains Rabelais' own literary creation, having given rise to no single folklore allusion whatsoever. The Gargantua has long been a part of the collection of tales known as the *Bibliothèque Bleue*, while the oldest reference we find to the name is contained in the Registre des Comptes of the Bishop of Limoges at Saint-Leonard, 1467–1475. This allusion, a mystifying one, antedates the *Grandes Cronicques* by some sixty years. The register was kept by one Jehan George, Curate of Merignat, who long had been in the service of the bishop, Jehan Barton. In the curate's records, the following entry occurs:

Item, le IIII[e] *de fevrier, vint Gargantuas lotger en la sala, et pour deux jours, tant desson cheval que despance par luy feite, v s.*

("Item, the fourth of February, came Gargantuas to lodge in the hall (the bishop's palace), and for two days, as well as his horse, for which the expense was," etc.). We have no means of knowing who this "Gargantuas" (the s on the end of the name is to be noted) was, but we have here, it is likely, one of the fashionable noms de guerre of the period.

Popular legends have a habit of apparently dying out or slumbering for a while, and then suddenly, for no perceptible reason, flaring up again. This was the case with the Gargantua myth. With the exception of the late-fifteenth-century entry just quoted, we have no record of the legend that we can assign to a date earlier than 1532, or the year in which the *Grandes Cronicques* came out. But about that time, it seemed to be springing up anew on a number of sides. We find a mention of Gargantua and his *chepveulz de plastre* (his white or plaster-like hair) in the *Pierre Faifeu* of Charles de Bourdigné; while a fragment which we possess of a certain dramatic piece, the *Farce du Goutteux*,—assuming that it is not itself an allusion to Rabelais' *Gargantua*, which does not seem probable—may shed a not unimportant light on the origin of some of Maître François' ideas. It may have been from this farce that Rabelais borrowed both his vinous colouring and his idea of literary therapeutics. One thing is certain, the beneficent effect of the legend was not an original inspiration.

The story is that of a gouty patient who, in the course of a severe attack, dispatches his valet to seek a physician. The valet is deaf, and thinks that what his master wants is a copy of the *Gargantua*. He, accordingly, begins to relate the giant's deeds of prowess (*prouesses*), to describe the book

itself and how it is to be purchased, etc. The valet's speech runs:

Monsieur, quand la grappe fut meure,
Incontinent l'on vendangea.
Gargantua beut et mangea,
A son desjeuner seullement,
Douze vingt miches de fourment,
Ung beuf, deux moutons et ung veau,
Et si a mis du vin nouveau
A deux petits traictz; dans sa trippe,
Deux poincons avec une pipe,
En attendant qu'on deust disner.

("Sir, as soon as the grapes were ripe, they gathered them in. Gargantua ate and drank at his breakfast alone two-hundred-forty round wheaten loaves, an ox, two sheep and a calf, and drained off the new wine at two little swigs; in his gut, two puncheons and a barrel, while waiting for them to serve dinner.") We come then upon a foreshadowing of Maître François' "substantific marrow":

Il a du livre en la science
Qui bien la scauroit gouster.
Or pensez, maistre, de gouster,
Et vous voirez icy comment
Gargantua faict argument,
Lequel estoit bonum quercus: . . .

Modern taste scarcely permits quotation of the Rabelaisian remainder, but the foregoing will give the idea: "There's science in the book for him who knows how to taste it. Think, then, master, of tasting it, and you will there see how Gar-

gantua put up an argument which was a *bonum quercus.*" There is here no recognizable allusion to Rabelais' own *Gargantua;* there were other versions of the Gargantua myth at the time, and it may be one of these that the author of the farce had in mind. In any case, the seeking of a copy of the *Gargantua* for a gouty patient is certainly suggestive. Did this provide an idea for the naturalistic physician from Montpellier, who believed in the therapeutic virtues of cheerfulness and laughter?

Another work of the same period which contains a Gargantua reference is the *Farce Nouvelle à Cinq Personnages,* apparently a Norman *sotie* with a strong Protestant flavouring. The two-line allusion, likwise spoken by a valet, is not an important one:

Il a gardé Garguentuas
Quant il trebuca aux Enfers!

("He guarded Gargantua when the latter stumbled into Hell!") The form of the name, *Garguentuas,* and the mention of a descent into hell on the part of the giant, elsewhere unheard of, are the features of interest.

A modern scholar, M. Seymour de Ricci, has uncovered in the Bibliothèque Méjanes at Aix the complete text of a work of some importance, entitled *La Grande et Merveilleuse Vie des Trespuissant et Redoubté Roy de Gargantua, Translatée de Grec en Latin et de Latin en Françoys.* The circumstances surrounding the publication of this piece are obscure, but it is known to be the work of François Girault, and it probably appeared in the year 1533, or the year before Rabelais' *Gargantua.* It is marked by a number of in-

cidents which remind us of the Maître's work, including the carrying away and giving back of the Parisian bells; the demolition of a pair of châteaux, etc. Girault was also the author (in addition to a work known as the *Moyen de Soy Enricher*) of the *Cronicques Admirables*, a revised and enlarged edition of the Gargantuan Chronicle. The *Cronicques Admirables* (once looked upon as Rabelais' own work) contain a number of borrowings from the *Pantagruel*.

This, then, was the field when François took it. The mythic Gargantua had by this time taken on certain very definite characteristics. Chief among these were:

1) His gigantic stature;
2) His gigantic strength;
3) His gigantic appetite.

It was the stress on the latter which was destined to survive.

The whole question of the origin of the Gargantua mythos is best summed up by the authority on French folklore, M. Paul Sébillot:

"The conclusion seems to be that there has existed in the past a vast legendary cycle, the giant heroes of which were in the habit of residing in or passing through a certain place, being noted for their strength, their enormous size, their appetites and their great strides. To these general attributes have been added fragmentary characteristics borrowed either from the legendary Hercules or from eastern giants, or even from the saints. Each of these personages originally possessed an individual existence and a name. Later, at a period difficult to determine with precision, they for the most part lost their individualities and were absorbed by a single Gargantua, just as the Roman Hercules had ended by taking on the attributes of all congenerous

heroes. This hypothesis, as I see it, is confirmed by the existence in many countries of giants possessing the same functions and qualities as Gargantua, even though their legends may have been to a greater degree effaced, while certain ones have lost their very names."

Professor Lefranc thinks that the rôle of Rabelais' giants in bringing aid to a hard-pressed sovereign or his people may be an adaptation of the legend of St. Michael, the Archangel, a legend common in the Saint-Malo region, in which the saint aids a more powerful God in putting down Lucifer's rebellion. This bringing of aid to a sovereign appears to be one of the attributes of the mythic giant; it is to be seen in the Chronicle; but with Rabelais, there is a difference, and in this he differs also from his Italian models: his aid-bringers are not vassals but sovereigns themselves; this was a developing touch added by Maître François.

As has been said, it was the stress on appetite which gradually overshadowed that on strength and stature; the order of emphasis came to be reversed: 1) appetite; 2) strength; 3) stature. It is a significant fact that the average reader of Rabelais is barely if at all conscious, save in hilariously exaggerated passages, that the heroes are giants, and the visualizations of the illustrator in this regard sometimes come with a shock of surprise. There are occasional feats of strength in the heroes' youth, such as Gargantua's carrying away of the bells of Notre-Dame or Pantagruel's replacing of the great bell of Orléans, or the latter's breaking out of his cradle; but as each book progresses, the hero becomes more and more normal, until the reader loses sight of all but their gigantic belly-girth and their enormous capacity.

Rabelais has become, in Hugo's phrase, "the Aeschylus of grub."

IV

Maître François' method of work, his method at least of setting about the erection of a framework for his creation, was very much like that of our own Shakespeare. Like Shakespeare, he took what he needed where and when he found it. This is the method of the great popular artist always: no false scruples, no uncalled-for pride. Plagiarism at the hands of a master artist becomes sublime; and when the result is achieved, one stands amazed at how little of the original borrowings and filchings remains. The thing has been transformed, transfused, and it is the ones who were robbed who are left apologetic. Rabelais took a number of names and incidents from the *Grandes Cronicques;* but his liftings are, after all, slight and unimportant; and contemporary scholarship is inclined to diminish rather than to accentuate his indebtedness to this or any other predecessor.

Grandgousier, for instance, appears in the Chronicle, but he has there none of the characteristics which Rabelais confers upon him; in the latter's work he comes alive and is a flesh-and-blood person. The name of Grandgousier's wife, Gargamelle, also is to be found under a slightly different form, Galemelle, in the preceding work; or perhaps it is, as the MM. Sainean and Lefranc would have us believe, not the same name at all, but one with a wholly different meaning which has merely been suggested by the sound of the other. The etymology of the names Grand-

gousier, Gargantua, Gargamelle and Pantagruel is none too definitely established, but those names all have reference to the *throat* or *gullet*. To this day, in French, the exclamation "*Quel Gargantua!*" means "What a big eater! What a glutton!" (As for the Galemelle of the *Cronicques*, it would seem to be, rather, Languedocian in origin: *galimello*, a tall, thin person.) Rabelais' most prominent characteristic, probably, in the mind of the ordinary citizen, whether that citizen has read him or not, is his ventripotence, his big-belliedness; and we are now enabled to see, thanks to the philologists, the genesis of that. The literary genesis, but no more. Rabelais himself was a belly-powerful person; else his Gargantua would be as unknown today as the hero of the other chronicles. And when, early in the last century, the Romantics discovered Maître François, after an age of Voltairean contempt, it was, precisely, this quality which impressed itself upon their imaginations. Let us hear Hugo:

Rabelais has made this find: the belly. The serpent is in man; it is the intestines. It tempts, betrays and punishes. Man, in order to be a mind with the complexity of a man, has three terrestrial centres in himself: the brain; the heart; the belly. Each of these centres is august, by virtue of its own great and proper function. . . . The belly may be tragic. . . . The belly is essentially the beast. Degradation appears to be its law. The ladder of sensual poetry has for its highest rung the Song of Songs, *and for its lowest the smutty story. . . . The belly is a dreadful weight on humanity; it is always breaking the equilibrium between soul and body; it fills up history. . . .What is Henry VIII.?*

A paunch. Rome is an overfed old woman. Is she sick or well? It may be a case of too much embonpoint; it may be dropsy; it is a question. Rabelais, physician and curate, takes the papacy's pulse. . . . Death is at the table. The last drop drinks with the last sigh. The colon is king. The whole of this old world is feasting and bursting. And Rabelais enthrones a dynasty of bellies. . . . There is a gulf in the gormandizer. . . . This great Rabelais is satisfied with the cellar. That universe which Dante laid in hell Rabelais situates in a cask. His book is nothing else. The seven circles of Alighieri bound and hoop-in this prodigious vat. Take a look at the inside of this monstrous keg, and you will see them there. . . . The papacy is dying of indigestion. Rabelais makes a farce of it. A Titanic farce. The Pantagrueline joy is no less magnificent than the Jovian gaiety. Jaw against jaw. The monarchic and sacerdotal jaw is engaged in eating; the Rabelaisian jaw is busy laughing.

Romantic, indeed! One might pause to pick a quarrel with M. Hugo, if his verbal auto-intoxication were not so delightfully evident—and so entertaining! I, for one, do not believe that Maître François took the belly, his own or any other, quite so seriously as all that. Hugo seems still to be labouring under the delusion that Rabelais is, primarily, the political and social satirist. A satirist he occasionally was, as in his onslaught on the papal decretals in his Fourth Book; but we shall discover that François was there acting as a royal propagandist, which somewhat alters the matter. And anyway, the names of his giant protagonists have reference, all of them, to the *throat*, rather than to the belly; and that is not exactly the same thing. Has

he not already informed us, in the thirty-second chapter of the *Pantagruel*, that he is contemplating a *History of the Throatians* (*Histoire des Gorgias*)?

Rabelais borrowed, as has been stated, not only a number of names but a number of incidents from the *Grandes Cronicques*, among which may be noted the Great Mare, the Notre-Dame bells and the Gargantuan flood which preceded their abduction. Gargantua takes a mighty swig of wine and nearly drowns the pilgrims who have lodged in his chops; compare the Chronicle: "He (Gargantua) drank so much that he dried up the river. Then the citizens who had fallen into his chops were all drowned." A number of instances of the sort may be found; but they do not mean a vast deal. In truth, when we contrast the borrowed with the novel and original elements, the former are lost sight of entirely, they dwindle so in importance. The *Grandes Cronicques* may have the bells incident, but they have no Janotus de Bragmardo to bring back the bells. And what should we do without Janotus, his "antique liripipium" and his haircut "*à la cesarine*"? What, above all, should we do without Frère Jean des Entommeures?

What is the origin of this latter unforgettable portrait of the Maître's? For a portrait it is, and a portrait from the life. Friar John may be a composite picture, but I am not inclined to think so. He is a monk whom Rabelais had known, touched up, it may be, and rounded out for the sake of artistic verisimilitude, but basically a real-life person. And he is, in all probability, a monk whom François knew at Seuilly, whom he had met or with whom he had renewed old acquaintance upon this visit back home. Friar John does not put in an appearance in Rabelais' first book,

the *Pantagruel;* but once having come upon the scene, he runs through the rest of the romance, which would not be the same without him. A remark made by the author in the forty-third chapter of his Third Book leads one to suppose that the Friar had been a Benedictine of Fontaine-le-Comte, under "the noble Ardillon." Whover he was, the monk must have been one who enjoyed the freedom of François' paternal household, and who was a welcomed and enlivening guest there.

We have certain documents in the case, early if not contemporary ones. Ménage in his *Dictionnaire Etymologique*, quotes a set of verses which would indicate that the Friar was one Buinard, Prior of Sermaise in Anjou. These verses are to be found in a work of Antoine Couillard (Paris, 1560), the *Contredicts . . . aux Faulses Prophéties de Nostradamus.* In prose translation, they run: "When Rabelais called you monk, . . . you were neither prior nor canon, but Frère Jehan de l'Entammeure," etc. Another text, dated 1654, identifies the Friar with a certain Jehan de Belpuy, Prior of Vindelle in the Canton of Hiersac, District of Angoulême, Charente, in 1547. The monk of Seuilly hypothesis, however, remains the most tenable; there is evidence (the notes of Bouchereau) to the effect that Friar John must have been the procurator of the Abbey of Seuilly, in the church of which François was, likely, baptized. The "Monk of Seuilly," therefore, who saves the abbey close, is in all literalness a monk of Seuilly.

As for the old-school commentators, their guesses at an identification for this bellicose character were many and laughably far-afield. Among their conjectures were the following:

That Friar John was a monk of Citeaux, who later became a canon and a prior;

That he was Odet de Châtillon, cardinal archbishop (to whom Rabelais dedicates his Fourth Book), who married without quitting the church;

That he was Cæsar Borgia, bastard son of Pope Alexander VI.;

That he was Martin Luther, originator of the Protestant Reformation;

That he was the Cardinal of Lorraine;

That he was a brother of Puy-Herbault, Francois' bitter enemy in later years;

That he was, merely, a "hero in the air," but one designed to give the death-blow to the institution of monasticism.

Le Motteux, Rabelais' seventeenth-century translator, sees in Friar John a composite likeness of Châtillon, Borgia, Luther, Montluc, Bishop of Valence, etc. Friar John saved the abbey vineyard; Luther saved the wine-chalice in communion! While the Abbé de Marsy opines that if Rabelais had meant Luther, he would not have made his friar "so ignorant." But Maître François was not thinking of any historical personages in connection with his romance; the simple, homely folks of La Devinière were good enough for him.

Rabelais' attitude toward monasticism and the manner in which he differed, by taking a lighter, more humorous view, from such other Humanists as Erasmus, Cornelius Agrippa and Ulrich von Hutten, has been discussed in the introductory essay to this volume. Friar John is ignorant; he refrains from study "from fear of the mumps"; his Latin is of the kitchen variety ("*Latin de marmiteux*," in Pantag-

ruel's phrase); he is fond of belly-splitting oaths, which are no more than the "local colour" he has picked up from his studies in "Ciceronian rhetoric"; he is a gormand and a drinker without a rival, and his table habits (see the nose episode at the end of Chapter XL.) are anything but over-refined. And yet, is he only the dirty, ignorant, gormandizing monk of the traditional (Protestant) picture? No, he is more than that. Read the chapter (Chapter XL.) on "Why It Is Monks Are Shunned by Everybody." Rabelais' chief criticism of the monks of his day is their idleness, their "uselessness"—compare Francis I.'s opinion, given us by Brantôme: "Useless fellows, good for nothing but eating, drinking, carousing, gambling, or making cross-bow-cords and rabbit-traps." So, Rabelais:

A monk—I mean those lazy ones—doesn't labour like the peasant; he doesn't guard the country like the soldier; he doesn't cure the sick like the physician; he doesn't preach to nor teach the world like a good evangelic doctor and pedagogue; he doesn't bring in commodities and necessities like the merchant. And that is the reason why they are jeered at and abhorred by all.

There is one phrase in this passage which deserves to be noted, for it is such a one as is commonly overlooked by those who are a trifle too eager to make out a case on one side or the other, and that is the qualifying clause which in the original is set off with parentheses: "I mean those lazy ones"; the French text is: "*Un moyne (j'entends de ces ocieux moynes)*." The author, speaking through Gargantua's mouth, takes pains to make it clear that in this particular instance at any rate, he is not attacking monks

as a whole, or that at least, he would make exceptions. Grandgousier, the elder and conservative generation, then speaks up:

"Well, but don't they pray God for us?"

"They do nothing of the kind," said Gargantua. "All they do is keep the whole neighbourhood awake by jangling their bells."

There can be no question that Rabelais had little of the ascetic, just as he had little of the mystic in his makeup,—have we not heard M. Plattard declaring that asceticism was "contrary to his very sense of life"—and he understood asceticism no better than he did mysticism; his Abbey of Thélème, the dream of a monk who would like to try Gargantua's suggestion of *depositâ cappâ*, is nothing more than an attempt to construct an imaginative escape from something he did not like and did not understand, for the reason that his spirit felt no need of it. Aside from this, there is nothing in the pages of the Maître, if we except his fun-poking at this as at all other institutions sacred and profane, to indicate that he was bent, as the Abbé de Marsy, himself a renegade Jesuit, asserts he was, upon uprooting monastic societies as a whole. As for monks of the Friar John type, he had a fondness for them; and why? Because they *labour*. Speaking of Friar John: "He works, he labours, he defends the oppressed, he comforts the afflicted, he comes to the aid of those who are in trouble, he is the watch-dog of the abbey." Friar John agrees with all this, and would make it stronger still by adding:

I do a good deal more than that; for while despatching

in the choir our matins and anniversary masses, I manufacture at the same time cords for crossbows, I polish bolts and arrows, and I make nets and traps for catching rabbits. I'm never idle.

In this, Friar John is putting into practice the counsels which St. Jerome gives to monks for the employment of their leisure hours: "Be at some work, so that the Devil will always find you occupied . . . weave rush-baskets . . . and nets for catching fish." The practice, according to De Marsy, had been abused, but the principle was there. In short, the keynote to the Friar's character is *activity*.

Marty-Laveaux has called attention to the fact that Friar John may have certain literary ancestors in the old chansons de geste and other romantic works prior to Rabelais' time, such as the *Deeds of the Four Sons of Aymon* and the *Aliscans* chanson. In the latter, there is a monk who skirmishes with his *tinel*, or big lopped pinewood-stick, in much the same manner that Friar John does with his stick of the cross; and the editor of the work, M. Gussard, believes that Rabelais may have borrowed from this hero some of his monk's characteristics. But it seems hardly necessary to go looking for literary sources. Friar John, assuredly, is not a literary character; he has stepped, not out of books, but out of life; he is one of the livest, liveliest and most original of the Maître's conceptions. He is, for his creator, the sort of monk that all monks ought to be. He is "not a bigot," and if we are to take Gargantua's word for it, he has in him something of a Protestant, or at least a Reform, bias:

They (the monks) mumble over a lot of fairy stories and chants which they don't in the least understand; and they say a great many Paternosters, interspersed with long Ave-Marias, without thinking of or caring about what they are saying. And all that I call a mockery of God, and not prayer. God help 'em, if they ever pray for us; all they pray for is from fear of losing their round-loaves and their thick soups. All true Christians of all walks in life, in all places and at all times, have prayed to God, and the Spirit prays and intercedes for them, and God gives them grace. That's the sort our good Friar John is.

But as we shall shortly see, this is the expression of a Protestant period through which Rabelais was passing, and from which he was to emerge.

V

From this Chinon visit of his in the vintage season of 1532, Rabelais brought back with him the underlying realistic elements of his romance. The contrast of generations which he had encountered in his own ancestral home, coupled with the etymologies of the names of his borrowed giants, provided him with his belly-dynasty. The stamping old Gaucher de Sainte-Marthe and the row over riparian rights had furnished the choleric Picrochole and that thundering Cake-Bakers' War. Friar John he had met, or met again, either at Seuilly or close about. Childhood memories, too, had come flocking back to him, hoary old proverbs, long forgotten, perhaps, and the good old thick-burred speech of the countryside. It was such memories which were to enable him to write that immortal Odyssey of all childhood in a page, which is to be found in the chapter entitled "Gar-

gantua's Adolescence." It would seem that, in this chapter, Maître François had collected all the proverbs, platitudes, bromidioms, dulcyisms, etc., of his time; scholars have unearthed many of these, but many others remain yet to be tracked down, and at the meaning of these latter we often only can guess. We are not to forget, either, that staggering catalogue of 217 games which is to be found in the twenty-second chapter.

But this homely realism would not, any more than the traditional gigantesque setting, have made François Rabelais' work what it is today; it is doubtful if these two elements alone would have made that work live. What *has* made the Maître live, outside of M. Taine's "drunkards and scholars"? It surely has been the degree to which he has succeeded in transmuting, at once, his age and his own intellectual and spiritual personality into the body and the substance of his work. For François was by this time a man, and one engaged in thinking the thoughts of a man who thinks. Mentally, he had gone a long way from Chinon; he had travelled far; was he not Pantagruel, one who had had the good fortune not merely to witness, like Gargantua, but to participate in that revival of "*bonnes lettres*" which was the age's glory? And so, it is only the to-be-expected thing, if we find him packing into his work, and packing in very tightly, the "substantific marrow" (*la substantifique mouelle*) of all that he was busied in thinking and doing at this period, all his travail of mind and soul. And not only the critic, but the biographer and his reader who would get a glimmering of François' inner life, his psychic curve, must "follow the dog's example" by breaking open the bone and sucking that inner and "Pythagorean" content.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE "SUBSTANTIFIC MARROW"

Following the dog's example, it is a good thing for you to be wise in sniffing, smelling and judging these fine books of high quality, easy to approach and hard to come to grips with; and so, by careful reading and frequent meditation, you should break the bone and suck the substantific marrow, which is what I mean by these Pythagorean symbols, being possessed of the certain hope that you will be made wise and wary by such a reading; for in the course of it, you will find things of quite a different taste and a doctrine more abstruse, which will reveal to you most high sacraments and horrific mysteries, in what concerns our religion, as well as the state and economic life.

PROLOGUE TO BOOK FIRST

I

NO writer in all literary history, it is almost safe to say, has been more interpreted and more misinterpreted than has François Rabelais. For some three centuries following his death, those who did not see in him a vulgar, clowning buffoon or an author for the *canaille*, were bent upon unearthing a deep and malicious, allegorically veiled political and social satirist. Had Rabelais' intention been such as

commentators of this ilk would make it out to have been, the Maître would have had precious little time for anything other than the devising of cryptograms for the concealment of his thought and purpose in writing. There was even a mania on the part of the older annotators for the compiling of complete "keys" to the *Gargantua and Pantagruel;* and as late as the middle of the nineteenth century, we find the learned though somewhat fantastic Paul Lacroix ("Bibliophile Jacob") dallying with this pastime. The school of "historical" interpretation, it may be asserted, is now dead, though vestiges of it still remain; and when we see the modern scholar making real-life identifications for certain of Rabelais' characters, as Professor Lefranc does in connection with the Third Book, we are not to assume that this is, by any means, the same thing as M. Johanneau's quite mad lucubrations, while M. Sainéan's philological investigations are at some distance from those of M. Le Duchat.

But to come back to our friends, the elder glossarists. The French Variorum editor is quite convinced that Grandgousier was none other than Louis XII., that Gargantua in real life was Francis I., Pantagruel Henry II., and so on. The Cake-Bakers' War he would explain as the Milanese war, following the usurpation of that duchy by Massimiliano Sforza. As for the cakes, they are "an allusion to Italian pastries in renown at the time, and possibly also the beautiful bakerwoman (*la belle boulangère*) of Lido, of whom Francis I. became enamoured in the course of this war." Friar John is Rabelais' ecclesiastic friend and patron, the Cardinal du Bellay, while the Abbey of Thélème is that prelate's château at Saint-Maur-les-Fossés, "where the

court of Francis sought diversion." But do not think for a moment that these long-forgotten allegorists agree among themselves; far from it. LeMotteux will tell you that Grandgousier is King John, and that Gargantua is Henry of Navarre; and another expounder will tell you something else; and what quarrels they get into among themselves, and what hard names they hurl at one another at times! One wonders what would be M. Johanneau's reaction, could he today know the truth, the homely everyday realism behind Rabelais' *Gargantua;* and M. Johanneau and the older commentators generally never heard of the Querelle des Femmes, without which Book Third loses much of its significance.

Was there, in truth, any "substantific marrow" to the Maître's masterpiece, any abstruse instruction such as he promises in the passage which has been quoted above from the Prologue to the *Gargantua;* or was the author simply spoofing, as the Old Boys with the overshoes and the green umbrellas would have us believe? It is a humourless sacrilege, these latter would maintain, to look for any serious content of any sort. And yet, that passage does not sound altogether like fooling, and if humour it be, it is not François' ordinary brand. Rabelais' humour is, as a matter of fact, not especially subtle, running as it usually does to broad ridicule and the horse-laugh, the deep-belly guffaw rather than the smile; like most doctors, when he means for his patient to laugh, he takes care that the patient sees the point at which to laugh; and there is no indication of the sort here, in this on the whole rather huffy preface.

After all, the best way to settle the question is by en-

deavouring to ascertain whether or not there happens to be anything in the way of a serious content; and it is impossible for any intelligent person to make a complete and thorough-going study of Rabelais' work without perceiving that there is such a content. One wonders, indeed, how the Old Boys ever got that way; they must possess a special edition of their own, with only the guffaws and the ribaldries left in, or they never would be able so to overstress one side of a writer and ignore utterly an equally prominent side. When Rabelais took over the old romance-of-chivalry skeleton, he did more than stuff it with his own Parisian, Chinon and other experiences; he did more than inject into a literary corpse a revivifying realism of incident and characterization; he put into the thing, also, as every mature writer who is spiritually alive must, his own world-view, his life-view, as that view grew and expanded. He put in, for one thing, to begin with the less important, his Humanistic preoccupations. Take a look at any one of his pages, and then glance at the *Grandes Cronicques* or any of his predecessors. The difference is so striking that one scarcely can conceive his own and these other works being written in the same age. Take that third chapter of the *Gargantua*, in which the subject of eleventh-month births is discussed. The author of the Chronicle would have put the thing in a few bald and meaningless lines; Maître François cites a small classical library. But these classical allusions, this direct and obvious propaganda for the New Learning, are less interesting and less significant than the ripening ideas of François Rabelais, the man, on the subject of education and the free life, war, religion and similar topics.

II

There is, first, education. A good part of the *Gargantua* —Chapters XI., say, to XXIV.—is little more than an educational tract. Rabelais has been termed the predecessor of Locke and Rousseau, and polyglot theses have been written by way of tracing his ideas on this subject. He advocated a realistic, life-rooted scheme, with a balanced stress on all the phases of normal human development in society. In his emphasis on the physical, he differed from the majority of his fellow Humanists, and this was due to his background in medicine and the natural sciences. The young Gargantua, under Ponocrates' reformed regime, even has a diet marked out for him, an unheard of thing at that time. In Ponocrates' scheme as a whole will be found many of the root-ideas of the best modern pedagogy, such as: education through the senses; the lessons in things; an initiation into "industry and the processes of trades"; hygiene; etc., the whole bound and held together by that naïve faith in human perfectibility and the "progress of humanity" which was the heart of the Humanists' creed.

"It was not an easy thing," says M. Guizot, "to speak reasonably about education at the time Rabelais wrote. . . . Rabelais, to avoid the danger of shocking preconceived ideas, began by transplanting his hero and the books which his hero read into an imaginary and an extravagant world; and by so doing, he acquired the liberty to rear his young Gargantua and to direct the latter's studies in quite a different manner than the one commonly followed in his day. College regents could hardly expect that this Gargantua,

who, when barely born, consumed at each of his meals the milk of 14,600 cows, and for whose first shirt were required 900 ells of Châtellerault cloth,—they hardly could expect this young prodigy to be treated like one of the small lads who trembled at the sight of their ferules; since the education of such an infant could not resemble that of ordinary children. And so, Rabelais, thanks to his mad premises, was free to rear Gargantua as he liked. . . ."

The same writer (in his *Annales d'Éducation*) has some interesting remarks to make with regard to Rabelais and the natural sciences:

"One cannot refrain from a feeling of surprise, mingled with admiration, when one thinks of the enormous progress which the human mind has made since Rabelais' time. . . . In the sixteenth century, mathematics and the natural sciences were in their infancy; or rather, what was worse yet, they had been transformed into astrology, magic, alchemy or other vain branches of knowledge, without any utility, as they were without any foundation of truth . . . reputable methods of instruction being unknown. Is it not a highly remarkable phenomenon that, in such a state of affairs, one man should have had sufficient sagacity and sufficient discernment, not merely to look upon the natural sciences as one of the principal objects of study in any scheme of education, but to make observation of the facts of nature the basis of such study, to halt his pupils with the examination of facts, and to indicate to the pupil the necessity of making a practical application of science, by leading his ward to the study of those arts and trades which make use of such applications?

"Is it not strange that this man should, thus, have placed

himself not merely on the road toward acquiring certain exact knowledge useful in sciences which did not as yet exist, but on the road, as well, by which scientists of today arrive at large and assured results and fruitful and enduring discoveries? That is, nevertheless, the very thing which Rabelais has done."

M. Guizot belongs to a somewhat pompous-speaking era; but what he says is substantially true. Substantially, but not wholly true. His slighting reference to alchemy, astrology and even magic, and "other vain branches," might now be corrected in the light of modern scientific knowledge; and we have already seen that it was not with any idea of concealing his ideas on education that Rabelais came to make use of his giant mythos. Anatole France has spoken of an effort on the part of the critics of the 1830's and the 1890's to romanticize Maître François, and to incline the latter to a certain gravity and meditative profundity; and he mentions Michelet, Henri Martin and Eugene Noël as among the writers who have been guilty in this respect, adding that it remained for Sainte-Beuve, "with his customary subtlety," to "correct the error" and to restore Rabelais' "independence" and "free humour." There can be no denying the fact that the liberals and the free-thought advocates, including the late-eighteenth-century rationalists, the Voltaireans and the French revolutionists, have rather overdone the thing, and their lineal successors of today are continuing to overdo it. On the other hand, no one is denying either Rabelais' independence or his "free humour" (just what the phrase may mean, I am sure I do not know); while the Sainte-Beuve pendulum has also had its little swing, and the "revaluations" of that gentleman no longer excite

us greatly, any more than does the doctrine of art for art's sake.

As for the details of the Rabelaisian pedagogic system, they have been considered in the introductory essay, in connexion with Humanist education in general; they will be found embodied—the ideals represented at least will be found there—in Gargantua's letter in the *Pantagruel.* The surviving elements of Scholasticism—repetition, memory, oral instruction and the like—should not be forgotten.

III

Rabelais' scheme, when summed up, tended to the Humanist ideal of the free life; and that ideal is nowhere better, more visibly manifested than in the visionary Abbey of Thélème which Gargantua proposes to found for Friar John. This has been termed a monk's dream, and as M. Plattard observes, it was, doubtless, a dream with which many a monk before François' time had toyed. The underlying conception, that of a "*religion,*" or convent, founded in direct opposition to all the principles of ordinary institutions of the sort, is to be found in a number of precedent writings, among which might be mentioned the *Temple de Venus* of Le Maire de Belges and the *Droits Nouveaux, De Presumptionibus* of Coquillart. A possible literary source also has been seen in the regulations for the *Monopolium Philosophorum* at the end of the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum,* while the French Variorum goes back to William of Malmesbury:

"William of Malmesbury, celebrated English writer of the twelfth century, accuses Guillaume, son of a Count of Poitiers and author of charming *fabliaux,* of having con-

ceived the singular idea of founding an abbey of beautiful women and pretty girls, more gallant than devout, and of giving them a rule suited to their manners. He does not conceal the fact that he desires to place at their head Maubergeone, Vicomtesse de Châtellerault, whom he was publicly keeping, and for whom he had abandoned his wife, Hildegarde. . . . Can it be it was this which gave Rabelais his idea of the Abbey of Thélème? It would appear all the more likely, for the reason that Châtellerault is very near Chinon." (A typical bit of reasoning on M. Johanneau's part.) . . . "Moreover, this idea had been realized before him, at Avignon, by the Queen of Naples, who had founded an Abbey of Venus, the matron of which bore the title of Abbess, the rule which she laid down being still in existence."

Bernier, another commentator, remarks that at Leipzig, dating from the year 1409, there was "a sort of college or society of immodest women, under the direction of a superior, taking Venus for their patroness, and taking lessons from abandoned old debauchees in order to learn how to render debauchery more agreeable, all the revenues accruing from these pursuits being devoted to the profit of the community."

But Rabelais, one may wager, was not thinking of any of these sources, though such works as those of Le Maire and Coquillart, as well as the conversations of his brother monks in times past, may have been latent in his mind at the moment of writing. Thélème represents, in addition to François' own innately anti-ascetic temperament, the lines of thinking on which he was engaged when he sat down to compose his *Gargantua*. It is not, for one thing, an erotic institution at all (Mr. Cabell and others have very generally

misread their Maître on this point), but a highly moral and idealistic one. The sexual ideal, so far as one is able to deduce it, appears to be a strict monogamy:

When the time came that any member of this abbey, either at the request of his relatives or from some other cause, wished to leave, he always took with him one of the ladies, the one who had taken him for her devoted follower; and the two of them were then married. And if they had lived at Thélème in devotion and friendship, they found even more of both after their marriage, and remained as ardent lovers at the end of their days as they had been on the first day of their honeymoon.

This, it must be confessed, does not sound extremely rakish or abandoned,—like a free-love colony or anything of that sort. It does not even sound like Mr. Cabell's Land of Cockaigne; leisure and luxury, yes, but not Florio's "the epicure's or glutton's home." Here, too, there is a survival of chivalry.

Much misconception has been due to a misreading of Maître François' motto, that FAY CE QUE VOULDRAS. According to certain commentators, the complete motto would read:

Fay ce que vouldras
Avoir faict, quet (*quand*) *tu mourras.*

("Do what you would wish to have done, when you come to die.") Whether this be true or not, a mere reading of Rabelais' description of his mythical abbey will convince the intelligent and properly prepared reader that the author is there engaged in setting forth the Humanist ideal

of freedom, based upon the belief that if coercion is removed and man is left to his own noble instincts, all will be well with the species; our modern anarchists, most sentimental of beings, hold to the same faith. Thélème, moreover, is to be an asylum, a sort of summer-colony for liberals. Among those welcomed are all who are looking for some sort of reform in the Church; for this was before reform had become synonymous with Calvinism. It was to be a refuge against "hypocrites,—the variety of synonyms for hypocrite that Rabelais is able to muster is an astonishing one—and "hypocrite," with the author of the *Gargantua*, meant the Sorbonne, that Sorbonne which had censured the *Pantagruel*.

IV

Of greater interest to us today, because of a greater enduring validity, are Rabelais' views, not any too overtly expressed, on the subject of war, a vital subject since 1914–18. He lived in a warring and a war-like age, when that invention of the Devil as Gargantua views it, gunpowder, was engaged in knocking down a civilization. His birth, as we have seen, coincided with Charles' first Italian expedition; and after Charles came Louis XII. and Francis I. Francis, and Charles V., and Henry of England—it was an age when even the Holy Roman Pontiffs girded on the warrior's sword. There was Julius II., who was reported to have tossed the keys of St. Peter into the Tiber, that he might make use only of the sword of St. Paul. When Michelangelo, so the tale runs, was making His Holiness' statue, being uncertain what to put in the papal left hand, he inquired: "Would you have me, Holy Father, make you holding a book?"—"No," replied His Holiness, "a sword; I know bet-

ter how to handle that." Whether the anecdote be veracious or not, it is in character.

War still kept its standing with everyone who had the right to wear a sword; but to the labouring classes it was a veritable scourge. The troops committed terrible depredations in the provinces through which they passed; and it was only when an army had been routed and had to fall back that the peasants took their revenge in kind. The enlightened minds of the age, such as More, Budé and Erasmus, had come to oppose the whole institution, and Rabelais, it is clear, agrees with them; though it was not safe, then as now, to be too clear about the matter. The entire Picrocholine episode may be taken as a satire on war, and at times, the satire becomes pronounced; for this was Maître François' more daring period. Read the chapter (Chapter XXVIII.) on "Grandgousier's Regrets and Difficulties in Undertaking a War." The aged Grandgousier almost reminds us of the late President Wilson: "Nevertheless, I shall not undertake a war until I have tried out all the arts and means of peace; on that I am resolved." He, in the chapter following, is against wars for aggression:

My plan is not to provoke, but to appease; not to attack but to defend; not to make conquests, but to guard my faithful subjects and hereditary dominions, which dominions Picrochole, without just cause or occasion, so hostilely has invaded.

Had he lived today, Grandgousier would have been for the League of Nations or the World Court. In Chapter XLVI., he gives a description of what we know as "atrocities":

The day is past for such conquests as that, to the damage of one's neighbour and Christian brother. That sort of imitation of the ancient Hercules', Alexanders, Hannibals, Scipios, Cæsars, etc., is contrary to the teachings of the gospel, which command us to watch over, protect, rule and administer each his own country and territories, and not inimically to invade those of others. What the Saracens and Barbarians used to term prowess, we now know as wickedness and brigandry.

We have, in the foregoing, everything but the actual employment of the word *Schrecklichkeit*. Throughout his work, Rabelais will be discovered indulging in more or less sly digs at militarism. Only in the Prologue to Book Third, in the case of a national emergency, does he become seemingly downright jingoistic for the moment; but war has been known to turn the heads of better pacifists than he; and after all, when one reads his description of Diogenes' barrel-rolling, one is inclined to suspect that he may not mean quite everything he says.

Few of us succeed in keeping our minds as cleanly consistent as, in weaker and less perceptive moments, we should like to see them. Has not Emerson had his word about a "foolish consistency" which is "the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines—With consistency, a great soul has simply nothing to do"? Rabelais' may be said to have been a great mind, in its sweep and expansiveness if not, perhaps, in depth; and his mind displays more than one inconsistency which might be pounced upon by any out for such game. He would appear to have had in him the spark of democracy; yet

he exhibits at all times an undeniable fondness for birth and breeding, place and power, the refinements and the softer things of life. It is true, he was never so abject a fawner as the parasitical Aretino could be at times; but some of the passages from his letters and dedications sound suspiciously like Arentino's *lodi*. On the side of his art, on the side of language which is his art and his enduring dower, he was popular in his geneses; he came from close to the soil. At the time of the French Revolution, he exerted, as Ginguené has pointed out, a posthumous influence all his own; and had he been there in the flesh, he doubtless would have been manning a sans-culotte barricade and shouting, LIBERTÉ, EGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ with the rest; just as, had he lived in 1810, he might have swum the Hellespont with Byron. And yet, in François' case, one never can be quite sure; much would have depended on his connexion with the Bourbons or with the leaders on the other side; for throughout his life, he was strongly influenced by personal attachments and considerations; his motives were seldom "pure" ones. As a rule, the safest wager is that he will be found taking, on any question, the Humanist position of his time; to this ideal, formed in his early monastic days at Fontenay-le-Comte, he was to remain predominantly true. We may say, then, that François' discreet and lurking pacifism was due to the democratic spark which, coming in advance of its time, slumbered within him; or we may say that his anti-war attitude was but another manifestation of his essential Humanist orthodoxy.

Pacifist or non-pacifist, Maître François knew his war; for war was life, and it was his business (though I do not think he was overconscious about the matter) to know the

life of his time. He knew his war, just as he knew his architecture; his knowledge of the latter comes out in his Abbey of Thélème, his acquaintance with the former in that heroic Cake-Bakers' struggle. The reader of Rabelais may be surprised to learn that the Picrocholine War is technically exact; military experts have had no fault to find with the author on this score. All the operations described have been traced on the map and found to be topographically accurate; just as the architecture of Thélème, in the Maître's description, is exact enough to permit of a modern architect's drawing up the elevation.

Rabelais' military science is not, however, to be taken with an over-degree of seriousness. Most of his knowledge had probably been conversationally acquired, from military men who were friends of D'Estissac and others. He undoubtedly, too, had listened to many tales on the part of the returning combatants from Italy as they passed through Lyons. He is, to sum it up, a clever popularizer; but his acquaintance scarcely strikes any deeper than that.

V

Anyone reading the *Garganua* alone would swear that its author was a Protestant, and a rather rabid one at that; but many things were happening in the political as well as the religious world; with these things François was closely in touch; and it is, accordingly, impossible to grasp his point of view as expressed in this book without some knowledge of those external occurrences. We have, once more, the danger of taking what an author writes as authentic biography, a process which has been greatly abused in the past in connection with Rabelais, but which can only lead

to confusion in his case, without that external corrective.

The *Pantagruel* had been condemned by the Sorbonne in the autumn of 1533, and from such a source as Herminjard's Correspondence of the Reformers, we are able to derive much light as to what was going on about this time, in theological, royalist and international circles, as well as what went on during the months following, up to the publication of the *Gargantua* in the fall of 1534.

The thing had started, probably, with Gerard Roussel's Lenten preaching at the Louvre, in the spring of 1533. Roussel, an almoner of the Queen of Navarre, attracted large audiences and depleted the pews of the orthodox exhorters. "My pulpit is deserted," declared one of the latter, Le Picard, "for there is nothing left me but a few old women; all the men have gone to the Louvre." The Sorbonnists naturally tried to kick up a row, but the King promptly squelched it, and the affair ended with the banishment of Noël Beda, the demon of orthodoxy, and other ringleaders of the opposition.

The Sorbonne, too, about the end of October, 1533, lost out in the affair of the Queen of Navarre's book, the *Mirror of the Sinful Soul.* Under the leadership of Nicolas Cop, the new rector, the university disavowed the former ruling of its theologians. This was a serious setback. Cop himself was to go a little too far, and provoke a temporary reaction against the new reform, by delivering on the first of November a discourse which Calvin practically had put into his mouth. The reaction did not last long, however, since the King speedily recovered from it. He had good reason for recovering, if ever a monarch did: he needed the help of Protestant Germany in his conflict with Charles, and nego-

tiations were already afoot to see if that help could be had. In these negotiations, the Bishop of Paris, Jean du Bellay, and his brother, the Lord of Langey, played a prominent part; and it was early in the following year that François formed his connexion with the prelate-diplomat and accompanied the latter to Italy. He was now with the Du Bellay-royalist faction.

It was also early in 1534 that Roussel, who had been imprisoned, found himself once more at liberty and cleared of the charges against him; and it was at this same time that the royal college of readers won out in its dispute with the Sorbonne. The Sorbonnists had objected to a study of the Scriptures on the part of those who were not theologians, but they lost their point. From now on, we see Protestant ecclesiastics such as Vatable, Toussaint and Danès flourishing, while the leaders on the other side, Beda, Le Clerc and Le Picard, are arrested for the crime of lèse-majesté. The struggle between state and Church had begun. It was but another version of that which, in England, was going on under Henry; it was, indeed, but an episode in that struggle against the papal empire of which the "Reformation" was the result.

Rabelais, then, is by no means espousing an unpopular cause, and is not exhibiting any particular bravery, when he launches forth in attacks on the "sophists" of the Sorbonne faculty—he came out, flat-footed, in his early editions with "theologian" and "Sorbonnist"; but later, after the flame and the heat had died down, and the political vane (the royal weathercock) had begun to veer in a slightly different direction, he went back and toned down these passages, substituting the non-committal "sophist." In the course of this

process of discreet revision, the world came near losing one of its most colourful phrases, in "*chopiner theologalement*," which might be rendered as "clink a theological can," the Sorbonne professors being noted for their modus bibendi. (Fortunately, if one rightly recalls, Montaigne came to the rescue.)

The picture, therefore, of a liripipiumed Janotus was one calculated to hit the bull's-eye of popularity. When told that he should be "content with reason," this maître exclaims: "Reason! We never use it here." Rabelais even takes off the proverbial uncleanness of the Sorbonne instructors; while waiting for a decision in their suit:

The masters, thereupon, made a vow never to take a bath, while Master Janotus and his adherents vowed not to wipe their noses until there should be a definite ruling in the matter. For which reason, they are to this day both dirty and snotty. . . .

There is also an allusion, in connexion with the unreformed and unwashed Gargantua, to "Almain's comb," which was "his four fingers and a thumb"; and Le Duchat thinks that the Jacques Almain referred to, a doctor in the University of Paris and the author of a treatise on logic, was probably renowned for his sloveliness.

Throughout the *Gargantua* as a whole, we distinguish certain out-and-out Protestant elements, such as an opposition to monasticism, to the veneration of relics, the worship of the saints, and pilgrimages. Some of the stronger passages were elided by the author in preparing the edition of 1542, the last revision before his death. One of these instances occurs in the sixth chapter, describing Gargantua's

birth. Here, two brief passages in the three earlier editions are not to be found in the later ones. The first comes in at the beginning of the chapter, where Grandgousier is assuring Gargamelle that she will not be able to remember her birth-throes after delivery:

"*I will prove it,*" *he said.* "*Our Saviour says in the Gospel,* John 16: '*A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish.*'

"*Ha,*" *said she,* "*that is well said, and I would much rather listen to such sayings from the Gospel, since I get more profit from them, than to the Life of St. Margaret or some hypocritical tale like that.*"

The other omitted passage occurs at the end of the chapter, where Grandgousier remarks that a good fellow and a man of good sense ought always to believe whatever he sees in print:

"*Does not Solomon say,* Proverbs 14; Innocens credit omni verbo? *And St. Paul,* First Corinthians 13: Caritas omnia credit. *Why will you not believe this? For the reason, you say, that it has no appearance of likelihood. I tell you that, for this very reason alone, you ought to believe it in perfect faith, since the Sorbonnists say that faith lies in believing things that possess no appearance of likelihood.*

This was strong writing in those days, the allusion to a saint's life as a "hypocritical tale," the play on St. Paul's "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." But Rabelais was riding on the wave; the unfortunate part was that, just at the moment his *Gar-*

gantua came out, the tide was to turn. That is a contingency which one who goes with events always has to face. Not that François was a thorough-going opportunist; he assuredly did not fancy being burned alive at the stake,—as, for that matter, who does?—but on the other hand, when things seemed to be safe and the powers behind him, he occasionally let his pen go too far.

In his attack on the Sorbonne, he had not only the royal power behind him, but the Queen of Navarre's Protestant coterie, including Lefèvre d'Etaples, Briconnet, and others. And when he comes to such a subject as pilgrimages, he is doing no more than echo the voice of Humanism and, so far as that goes, of the orthodox pulpit. This was an abuse of the time which all right-thinking persons within the Church itself desired to see rectified. It is Grandgousier speaking:

"Go on home, you poor fellows, in the name of God the Creator; may He be your constant guide. And in the future, do not be so easily persuaded to undertake these idle and futile journeys. Support your families, labour each at his trade, bring up your children, and live as the good apostle St. Paul teaches. If you do this, you will have with you the protection of God, of the angels and of the saints, and no plague nor any other evil shall do you harm.

That "good apostle St. Paul" is the key to the whole thing. Rabelais was essentially Pauline in his theology at this period, and fond of a "good evangelic preacher." Thélème is to be open to the Evangelicists, its creator not appearing to suspect, as yet, that there is little in the way of a bond between himself and those who are to take over the

direction of the new reform. Even Marguerite of Navarre would not have approved that chivalric principle of *honour* on which the institution was founded; she, as is apparent from her *Heptameron*, would have looked upon it as a denial of the rôle of divine grace; while her natural ascetic instincts would have caused her to suspect an assault on monasticism as an attack on all religion.

As M. Plattard observes, François' evangelicism is, when all is said, superficial. The French biographer sees in it that form which "his deism" took under the lash of his reason. François, the fact is, was engaged in that general attempt on the part of the Humanists, Budé, Erasmus and others, to reconcile their essentially naïve faith with the Christian conception. The Humanists believed in the innate nobility of man, the Christians in his fall and his need of redemption. How reconcile the two? Could they be reconciled? The early Humanists believed they could be. Grandgousier, the eldest generation, expresses the Christian concept, when he says, speaking of Picrochole: "By this, I know that the Eternal God has abandoned him to the direction of his own free will and his senses, which are always worthless when not constantly guided by Divine Grace." The Humanist says: "Those who are free born and well born, well brought up and used to decent society, possess by nature a certain instinct and spur which impels them to virtuous deeds and restrains them from vice, an instinct which is the thing called honour." What reconciliation was there possible between "Divine Grace" and that "certain instinct and spur"?

The Humanists in many respects were, and are, the children of light.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

FAGOTS FLAME; MAÎTRE FRANÇOIS "DOES A DUCK"

It is not now that those who have been brought back to the Gospel faith are persecuted. But happy, indeed, is he who shall not be scandalized, and who shall persevere straight to that end which God, through his dear son, has foreordained for us, without being distracted or led astray by his own carnal affections.

Book First, Chapter LVIII.

"I swear to God, whichever one of you does a duck, damme if I don't make a monk out of him in my stead and harness him with my own frock, for it's a good remedy against cowardice."

Book First, Chapter XLII.

I

IT seemed, in the early months of 1534, as though France, thanks to its sovereign's ambitions and the eye which he was casting in the direction of the German states, had been made safe for the Reformation; and it likewise seemed that the basic, the essential ideas of the Renaissance were bound up with the latter cause. His Majesty, it appeared, had been won over. Thanks to the efforts of Du Bellay and his asso-

ciates, many of the theologians were in prison or in exile. Guillaume du Bellay, Seigneur de Langey, the prelate's brother and François' friend, had gone to Germany with certain propositions, and to these such Reform leaders as Melanchthon, Bucer and others had lent a not unfavourable ear. The attitude on both sides was a conciliatory one, there was talk of an ecclesiastical peace, and the air was filled with hope.

And then, on the night of the 17th.–18th. of October, 1534, the whole situation was altered between dusk and dawn. For during that night, in the leading cities of France —at Paris, Orléans, Rouen, Tours, Blois and even on the door of the King's chamber at Amboise—anti-Catholic placards were posted up, inveighing against the institution of the mass and against the pope and the cardinal college. This at once reversed everything; the King swung back to the other side, and the year which had begun so auspiciously for the advocates of Reform went out in darkness, so far as their hopes were concerned. The Sorbonne found itself the victor after all, and proceeded to kindle bonfires of joy, the flames of which were fed by heretics. There were proscriptions, arrests and decrees of arrest, trials, condemnations, and terrible punishments meted out on all sides. The reaction spread to printers, writers and booksellers, who were tracked down and some of them, like Augereau, burned alive. At Paris alone, more than twenty Lutherans were burned, after their tongues had been pierced and their hands cut off. Citizens were banished and their goods confiscated. The Sorbonne even endeavoured to stop all further printing of any books whatsoever until further order; but here, Budé and Du Bellay stepped in to head off the reaction-

aries and to prevent any such edict from bcoming an official act of parliament.

It was then that those Humanists who possessed an evangelic bias began to quake. They had been safe up to then, in the shadow of the throne, only one of their number, Louis de Berquin, having paid with his life at the stake, and he had been saved once by royal order, and probably would have been saved a second time, if his execution had not been speeded up. In short, that mysterious "Enigma in the Form of a Prophecy," really a poem of Mellin de Saint-Gelais', with which Maître François brings his *Gargantua* to a close appeared to have been a true prophecy, after all. The author, it will be recalled, endeavours to veil his veils by making out that this "Enigma" is no more than a description of a game of tennis; but nevertheless, in true Rabelaisian form, he drops us a hint that it may be something else:

The monk then spoke up and inquired: "What do you think, what do you understand is indicated and meant by this enigma?"

"What could it be," replied Gargantua, "except the course and progress of divine truth."

In any event, the "Prophecy" had come true, rather startlingly; and the moment of its coming true was, one might say, anything but a propitious one for the appearance of such a work as the *Gargantua* containing it.

Yet it was precisely at this moment, the evidence is, that the *Gargantua* did come upon the stalls. François, having returned from his Italian trip, had resumed his duties at the Hôtel-Dieu in August. The *Gargantua* must have been composed before the author went to Rome, since in it we

find no slightest allusion to or memory of that experience. François may have turned in the manuscript before setting out with his sciatica patient, and the work may have come off the press immediately upon his return, and have been put on sale at the August, 1534, fair. The actual composition no doubt had been begun and the greater part of the book written immediately following Rabelais' Chinon visit in the fall of 1532, though he must have been working on it a good part of the year 1533. If the book was not put on sale at the August fair, it certainly saw the light early in October, before that fateful night of the 17th., when the *affaire des placards* occurred. This incident alone serves to date the book on at least one side, since it is unthinkable that it should have been published during the period of rabid persecution which resulted from the posting of the placards.

François then found himself in a pretty predicament, not to say a pickle, for a young author who had looked forward to riding in on a wave of popularity (even though the popular cause did happen to be one in which he sincerely believed at the time), and who now found that he would be lucky if he did not follow De Berquin and Augereau to the stake, and all as a result of his having given expression in his book to sentiments which, a few months before, would have won him a coveted popularity in the circles of power and influence. One can imagine what must have been Maître François' feelings, as he heard of that solemn procession, by way of public reparation, in which the King himself had carried a candle, and which had been marked by the burning of half a dozen heretics. What did he think, too, when he heard of the summonses served on seventy-three subjects

of the realm who were suspected of Lutheranism, and when he further learned that among these were his friends, Clément Marot and Lyon Jamet. His feeling, very likely, was that there was not sufficient distance between himself and the Sorbonne.

It was on the 23rd. of January, 1535, that those seventy-three summonses were served; and on the 13th. of February following, we find François drawing a 15-pounds balance due him at the Hôtel-Dieu from August, 1534, to date. And then, the Maître, to employ his own expressive phrase (*faire la cane*),—"did a duck." Abandoning his precious Gouty Ones, he simply dropped out of sight. He must, however, have informed his friends or his colleagues of the fact that he intended doing so; for the very next day, there appeared at the Hôtel-Dieu no less than three applicants for his place: Charles des Marais, Pierre du Castel and Jean Canappe. Du Castel finally got the place, on the 5th. of March, at a salary of ten pounds less than his predecessor; but not until there had been rumours and some public discussion; in the course of a debate on February 23rd., we find one of the city fathers, Pierre Durand, proposing to postpone the appointment of a successor until Easter time, "since it is understood that the said Rabelais is at Grenoble, and may return."

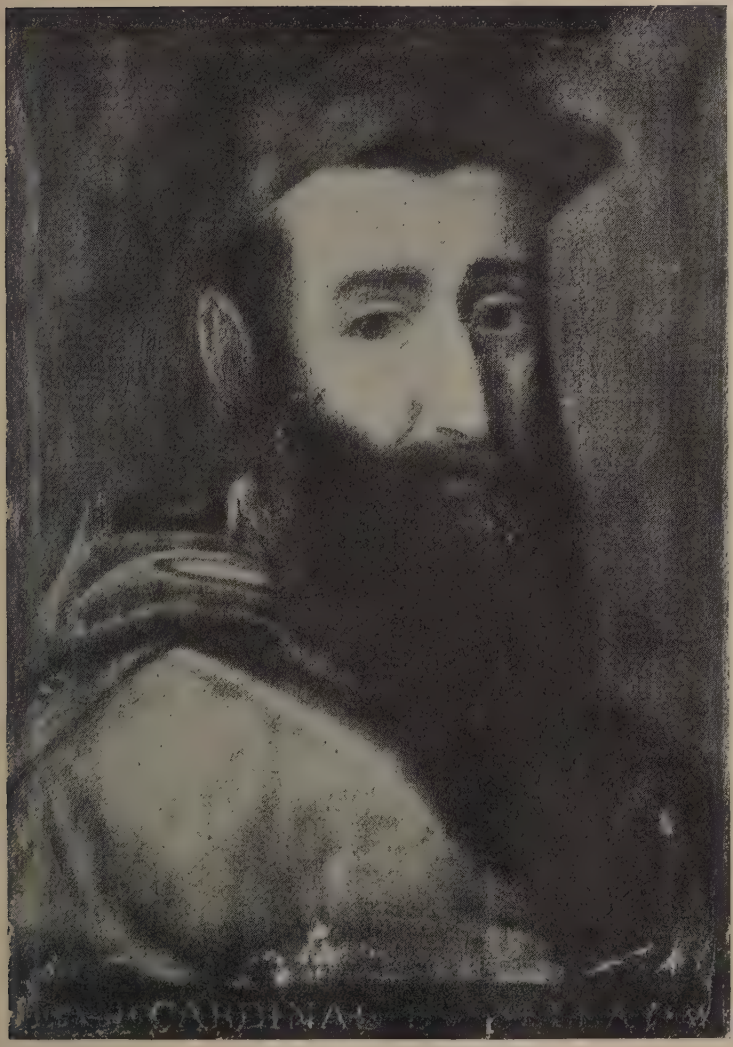
The truth is, we have no idea where François spent the first months of this year (1535); this is another one of those dark, blank spaces in his life; but in this case, we are enabled to see very clearly why it is he drops from sight, and we are able to form certain plausible conjectures as to where he kept himself. The natural supposition is that he must have gone back to seek the protection of his old friend,

who was still his ecclesiastic superior, the Bishop of Maillezais; for François, we are to remember, was still supposed to be fulfilling the functions of a Poitevin priest and the member of a religious order; as a medical student at Montpellier, he was absent without leave from his religious duties, as a literary man at Lyons, he was academically in absentia, and now he is once more a. w. o. l. from his Hôtel-Dieu post.

Meanwhile, in January, 1535, Antoine Rabelais had died, and the family property had been divided between Jamet and Antoine Rabelais (Jr.), René Pallu and Françoise Rabelais, his wife, Jean Gallet and Michel Endre. François, as we have seen, was "legally dead." But if he is legally dead, he is civically alive, since in the margin of a Lyons census of this year, we find him listed as of the rue du Bois.

We should not forget to mention, also, the publication at the end of December, 1534, of Maître François' *Almanac for the Year 1535*. This almanac was "Calculated for the Worthy City of Lyons, at a Polar Elevation of XLV. degrees, XV. Minutes Latitude, and XXV. Longitude, by Master François Rabelais, Doctor of Medicine and Physician of the General Hospital of Lyons." It is of more than usual interest for the serious tone that prevails throughout; there is not a jest to be found in the fragment of some half a dozen paragraphs which we possess. Indeed, the tone of these paragraphs is a tristful, even a melancholy one. The great jester is discovering that life can be something more than jest at times.

By the spring of 1535, the persecution had let up somewhat, the pope himself, as well as the king and parliament, having taken a hand to stop it. Prosecutions were dropped,



"Doctissimo Humanissimoque"

(Jean Cardinal du Bellay, Rabelais' Close Friend and Patron for Years. Musée de Versailles)

and fugitives began returning from Germany to France. For Francis still had need of those German allies.

But at Lyons, Pierre du Castel had been duly elected to fill the place of François Rabelais, "who is absent from the city, and from the said hospital, without leave, for the second time."

II

It is possible that François was back in Lyons by the month of May. The Lyons printer, François Juste, was already at work upon a second edition of the *Gargantua*, which shows that, despite the unfriendliness of the times, the first printing must have had some little success.

On the 21st. of May, Jean du Bellay, Bishop of Paris, was made a cardinal by Pope Paul III., for whose election he had persuaded the French cardinals to vote. Du Bellay announced that he would go to Rome to receive the red hat, but he was, in reality, engaged upon one of his usual important diplomatic missions. His mission this time, it should be scarcely necessary to state, had to do with Francis I. and Germany. In going to Rome, he passed through Lyons, on July 15th., and there picked up Rabelais once more. The bishop's sciatica was troubling him again; he had need of his former physician's services; and François, we may believe, required little urging. Was he still "doing a duck"? It is not likely. The worst of the danger was over. None the less, after the nervous tension of the few months past, Maître François doubtless felt that a change of scene would be beneficial.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SALADS, PRINCES AND A PENITENT

As to the seeds which I sent you, I would assure you that they are the best to be found at Naples, and such as the Holy Father has planted in his own Belvedere garden. They do not have any kinds of salad down this way except Orléans cress and wild-vetch. Those of Ligugé impress me as being quite appetizing, as well as a little easier on the stomach, especially in your own case; the ones from Naples are, I think, a little too fiery and a little too tough.

THE LETTERS FROM ITALY, III.

The Pope on his part will reply that he has no money, and will proceed to furnish manifest proof of his poverty. Whereupon, the Emperor, no disbursements having been made, will demand the fiefs of the Duke of Ferrara, which hang merely on a Fiat. *And there you are; you can see for yourself the vast mystery connected with the little game that is being played down here, where one never can be sure of anything.*

IBIDEM

Verum, Pater Sancte, cum dictus Orator ad cor reversus de praemissis doluerit et doleat ab intimis, cupiatque ad Ordinem S. Benedicti huiusmodi in aliquo monasterio, seu alio eiusdem Ordinis regulari loco, cum animi sui quiete redire; supplicat igitur humiliter supradictus Orator. . . .

SUPPLICATIO PRO APOSTASIA

I

WHEN François rejoined the Cardinal du Bellay's household, he missed the presence of two of his friends, the two who had been his companions in the exploration of the Holy City upon the occasion of his previous visit; these were Claude Chappuis and Nicolas Leroy. In their stead, he met Jacques d'Angennes, Sieur de Rambouillet, and Charles Juvenal des Ursins, Abbot of Saint-Nicaise, as well as Guillaume Pellicier, Bishop of Maguelonne, a distinguished Humanist of the day, who was now going to Rome to see if he could not hasten matters with regard to the transfer of his episcopal seat to Montpellier.

On the 22nd. of July, the party made a stop in Ferrara, at the court of Ercole d'Este. This was one of the most brilliant courts of the Italian Renaissance, and one of the most polished, refined, voluptuous and treachery-rife to be found anywhere in all Europe; it was one where flowered, in all its perfection, that courtier's art which Castiglione had taught, along with other arts in which Castiglione had not been the preceptor. French liberals had good reason to know this court, for the reason that it was one which, in times past, had proved a saving refuge in case of dire necessity. Ercole, eight years before, had married Louis XII.'s daughter, Renée, their nuptials providing the theme for an epithalamium by Marot. Unhappily, the hopes placed upon this alliance had not been realized, and the Duchess Renée was none too happy. She inclined to Evangelicism, which caused her to welcome such refugees as the poet Marot

and others. This annoyed the Duke, who, when he was not jealous, was finding fault with his wife on other grounds; and he was particularly annoyed by the manner in which Renée unloosened her purse strings when her countrymen were in need. At Ferrara at this time, François met Marot, the latter's friend, Jean de Bouchefort, precentor of the royal chapel, and Lyon Jamet, the last named being a clerc des finances and a sergeant of Bois-Pouvreau in Poitou. It may have been here that Rabelais and Marot began that friendship which, we know from an epigram of the poet's, existed between them.

As has been said, things were not going any too well with the Duchess, her consort being of a mind to dismiss her entire French household, including Renée's housekeeper, Madame de Soubise, and the latter's two daughters, Anne de Parthenay, Dame de Pons, and Renée de Parthenay. Du Bellay, always the diplomat, intervened and had this dismissal deferred until after the Duchess' approaching accouchement. François, for his part, was keeping his eyes about him and making a note of everything. He had rather a flair for intrigue, or at least, derived a certain zest from politics of all sorts—"intrigue" is too strong a word for the thing. Politics were something of a necessity in his day, for a literary man as for others, and above all, for a Humanist in the Church; and it is not a matter of record that they have since, at any period of the world's history, become dispensable.

We shall soon see the Maître, on this second Italian trip of his, busying himself not merely with his own affairs at the papal court, but also with a mysterious matter in which his far-away friend and patron, the Bishop of Maillezais,

happens to be interested; we shall find him arranging very carefully for the delivery of intimate correspondence in such a manner that there will be no danger of its being tampered with by the wrong parties; we shall discover him making use of the diplomatic mail-pouch for his own private purposes, and seeing to it that it is opened by the right person at the other end; and we shall even hear of a correspondence in cipher. For all of which, we cannot blame him; the times were far from safe; and as it was, he was not careful enough, since on at least two occasions, we shall find him getting into serious difficulties over imprudent correspondence.

When he was not interested in politics and political manœuvrings that directly concerned himself, François possessed a modern journalist's interest in observing and noting down those of others. With regard to the situation in the D'Este household at Ferrara, we have from him, in a letter from Rome a little later:

With regard to the Duke of Ferrara, I have written you how he returned from Naples and went back to Ferrara. Madame Renée has given birth to a daughter. She had, already, one beautiful daughter, aged from six to seven years, and a small son aged three years. The Duke was unable to agree with the pope, for the reason that he asked an excessive sum for the investiture of his lands, and this notwithstanding the fact that he already had knocked down (avoit rabattu) *fifty-thousand crowns for love of the lady in question, as a result of the activities of those gentlemen, the Cardinal du Bellay and the Cardinal de Mâcon, who wished to assure the Duke of Ferrara's conjugal affection. Which was the reason why Lyon Jamet came to this city. . . .*

And in a previous letter, he had written: "The Duke has removed Madame de Soubise, her (Renée's) governess, and has provided her with Italian servants, *which is not a good sign.*" That "which is not a good sign" says much; it is, in a manner, an epitome of the history of the times; and it is also a sample of the fashion in which Maître François, in his correspondence, sometimes conveys a thought without uttering it.

The stop-over at Ferrara lasted for four or five days, and then the party was off for Rome. They reached the Holy City on the last day of July or the first day of August. Here, François put up at the embassy and took his meals either at Cardinal du Bellay's or at the ambassador's, the latter being Hémard de Denonville, Bishop of Mâcon. In a letter to D'Estissac, he informs the latter that he has to provide, simply, for his room-furnishings and for his clothes. But he is apparently short of money, and finds it difficult to make ends meet:

I am sorry, but I am compelled once more to have recourse to your charity. The thirty crowns which you were kind enough to cause to be delivered to me here are about all gone. I may tell you that I have not spent any of this money foolishly, nor on my stomach; for I eat and drink at the house of M. the Cardinal du Bellay, or at that of M. de Mâcon. But in connexion with all these little scribblings of despatches, the renting of furniture for my room and the upkeep of my clothing, much money gets away, though I am as niggardly as possible in my budget. If you care to provide me with something in the way of a letter of credit, I hope to employ it only in your service; and what is more, I trust I shall by no means prove ungrateful.

Panurge's affliction again. That assurance that none of the money is spent "on my stomach" is to be noted. This no doubt was unnecessary; for the princes of the Church kept good tables—and good cellars; and Denonville, who was the regular ambassador to the Holy See, had written in advance to the newly created cardinal, assuring the latter that "You will find the cellar well furnished, and I trust to see that the wine is cold enough for you" (*espere vous faire boyre froid*). (The ambassador had rented an apartment for the Du Bellay ménage in his own building.)

But François, we may by this time assume, did not journey to Rome for the purpose and the pleasure of stuffing his gullet or ascertaining the variety and quality of the wine that was drunk there. He was a busy man, since in addition to being physician to France's most distinguished cardinal and diplomat, he had affairs of his own to attend to, affairs of pressing importance, having to do with the regularization of his ecclesiastic position, as well as numerous commissions to execute for his friends back in France. Not only this, but he had an official and social position to keep up; he could not have been a tavern brawler, had he been so inclined, and still have remained in the Cardinal du Bellay's suite.

His time on this trip, outside his professional duties, was very largely taken up with efforts to secure a papal absolution for his infraction of the ecclesiastic statutes. This probably had been the thing, rather than any desire to get out of France for safety's sake, which had led him to accept the second du Bellay invitation. He was a bit tired, by now, of trailing his monk's frock; Friar John's sport of woolleaving had begun to pall a little upon him; it was not very

convenient from a worldly get-on point of view, and he was still thinking of his doctor's hood. Moreover, in such an emergency as that through which he and his friends had just passed, it might be decidedly inconvenient to be caught up without the proper credentials and the proper footing in the Church. And so, upon his arrival in Rome, he proceeded to file with the pontifical chancellery a *Supplicatio pro Apostasia*, or Prayer for Absolution from Apostasy. By the 30th. of December, it seems that the matter is on the verge of being finally and definitely settled:

As to my own business, I may for the moment assure you that it has been taken care of, and in a good deal better and more satisfactory fashion than I could have hoped. In this connexion, I have had the advice and assistance of certain good friends, especially of Cardinal Ghinucci, who is palatial judge, and of Cardinal Simonetta, who was formerly auditor of the chamber, both of them being very wise in such matters. The pope was of the opinion that I should permit my business to be handled per Cameram, *but the others thought it should go through the Court of Rejoinders. For the reason that,* in foro contentioso, *it is unassailable in France,* et quae per contradictoria transiguntur transeant in rem judicatam; quae autem per Cameram, et impugnari possunt, et in judicium veniunt. *In any event, it only remains for me to take up the bulls* sub plumbo.

Monseigneur le Cardinal du Bellay, together with Monseigneur de Mâcon, has assured me that the settlement would be taken care of gratis. This, despite the fact that, in accordance with customary usage, the pope does not grant such favours gratis, unless the matter is handled per Cam-

eram. *As it is, I shall merely have to pay the referendaries, advocates and other such parchment-smearers. If my money runs short, I shall be forced to appeal to your charity.*

As to the cardinals who were helping him in his affair, Hieronimo Ghinucci of Sienna was apostolic nuncio to the courts of Charles V., Francis I. and Henry VIII., while Giacopo Simonetta of Sienna held the bishopric of Pesaro and other sees. François, it is to be seen, is far from being unbefriended. As for the legal aspects of the case, the "*per Cameram*" refers to the pontifical chamber, while the Court of Rejoinders (*Cour des Contredits*) was what was known as the *Audientia Litterarum Contradictarum*. The substance of Maître François' Latin is: "Matters which are handled by rejoinders (in a court of contention: *in foro contentioso*) assume the status of an adjudicated cause; those, on the other hand, which are dealt with in Chambers not only may be impugned, but may be brought to trial." As François says, a matter settled "*in foro contentioso*" is "unassailable in France," which was the thing he was seeking: he was looking for a weathertight decision, one which would stand, back home; else, it would do him little good in a pinch, and he might as well have had none.

The allusion to the settlement's being "taken care of" is also enlightening, with the statement that the Holy Father does not usually grant such favours, unless the matter is handled in chambers. And to pay the "parchment-smearers," he will likely have to have recourse to his good friend, the Bishop of Maillezais' bounty, though the latter was to a degree obligated for his ecclesiastic ward. And here, it may be remarked that D'Estissac himself probably was just as

well pleased to see the case disposed of and out of the way, once for all, inasmuch as his own share in the matter might have been subject to scrutiny on the part of a churchly superior who wanted to cause trouble.

In his *Supplicatio*, couched in the Church's inimitable Latin which loses flavour utterly in translation, François confesses that he has been guilty of apostasy and of ecclesiastic irregularity in having abandoned his cloister, having laid aside his monk's robe, and having gone about in the garb of a secular priest. He then petitions the sovereign pontiff for a plenary absolution, and for permission to resume the habit of St. Benedict, and to enter a monastery of that order other than that of Maillezais. He further seeks permission to practise, without restriction of place, devoutly and without mercenary considerations, the art of medicine, in which he has taken the degrees of bachelor, licentiate and doctor. And Pope Paul III., under date of January 17, 1536, in the second year of his pontificate, granted a brief of absolution, that brief having come down to us. In this document, the Holy Father authorizes his erring son to enter the Benedictine monastery of his choice and to practise the art of medicine, provided that, as the formula ran, he made use of neither bistoury nor cautery, and provided also that he did not practise his calling for gain. Thus was one chapter of Maître François' wanderings officially brought to a close; but it was not the last chapter.

II

But aside from this pressing "business" of his, which may have been his chief reason for going to Rome, how did Maî-

tre François put in his time? What intellectual stimulus did he receive from this his second sojourn amid the eternal hills? It would seem that, this time, he was a good deal more interested in contemporary than in ancient Rome. Archæologizings are in the background; he sets up no gnothon and plans no *Topographia;* his concern is, rather, with the persons and events that closely surround him.

Fortunately, we have a somewhat extended epistolary record of this stay, which enables us to visualize not only the events of world importance which were happening in and about Rome at this time, but also our subject's more quotidian interests and pursuits. The botanist in search of rare plants unknown in his native France, has given way to the friendly horticulturist, on the lookout for seeds that will grow in the Bishop of Maillezais' Poitevin garden and for salads which will not disagree with His Lordship's stomach. He ends by deciding that the Bishop would do better to rely for his vegetables upon his own garden-plot, since those of Naples are "a little too fiery and a little too tough," whereas "those of Ligugé impress me as being quite appetizing, as well as a little easier on the stomach." This eupeptic solicitude for his patron led to the Maître's winning, at the hands of posterity, the laurels of a pioneer horticulturist; we find a eulogist of 1860 crediting him with the introduction into France of the Roman variety of lettuce, of the melon, the artichoke, the Alexandria pink, and other plants.

There are many other seeds on sale here, such as Alexandria pinks, matronal violets, a certain other plant with which in summer they keep their rooms cool, and which they

call the Belvedere, and other medicinal herbs. But these concern, rather, Madame d'Estissac; if you yourself are at all interested, I shall be glad to send you some without fail.

And when it is not His Lordship's seeds and salads, it is "a thousand little exotic trinkets, of one sort or another in this city, and very cheap ones at that, which they import here from Cyprus, from Candia and from Constantinople. If you like, I will send you whatever you think will best suit you and Madame d'Estissac. The transportation from here to Lyons will not cost anything." Our archæologist of yore has become a trinket-buyer, and he buys not only for his patron, but for his less lofty friends back home. There is Michel Parmentier, the Lyons bookseller at the sign of the Écu de Bâle, who kindly sees to the forwarding of François' letters from Lyons on:

I, in addition, keep our friend Parmentier in little gifts, in the form of novelties from down this way, which I send to him or to his wife; this to spur him on to be a little more diligent in seeking out merchants or messengers going to Poitiers who will deliver my missives to you.

All this we learn from the collection commonly known as the *Letters from Italy*, letters which François wrote to Geoffroy d'Estissac. We know that he wrote eight letters in all, the first being despatched from Ferrara. Of these eight, five are lost. The surviving epistles we know through the 1651 edition of the frères Sainte-Marthe, based upon early-seventeenth-century copies; they will be found in manuscript in the Dupuy collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale, while the letter dated January 28, 1536, will be found in manuscript in the Morrison Collection at London; in

establishing and clearing up the text, an invaluable service has been performed by a French scholar, M. V.-L. Bourilly.

These letters throw an entirely novel light on Rabelais the writer. Anyone expecting to find in them the broad, Gargantuan humour, the keen wit, sharp-edged satire and overwhelming ridicule of the same writer's major work is bound to be sadly disappointed. Those qualities simply are not there,—barely a trace of them. What we do have is the respectful, formally worded, cautious communications of a cleric, if a somewhat worldly one, to his bishop. They are, one must admit, infinitely superior, for example, to Aretino's fawning or threatening ones. Their simple, matter-of-fact, straight-to-the-point style tends to redeem them. There are few rhetorical or other flourishes, and there is in them a certain good journalism, a quality that is still more prominent in the *Sciomachia*, to be considered later. But they make dull reading on the whole. Granted an intimate knowledge of the events of the period and of the personal implications, and they take on an interest of a sort; but otherwise, not. As M. Bourilly pleasantly notes, great writers are not always great in their correspondence; and there is, presumably, such a thing as an epistolary manner or style. Professor Lefranc has pointed out that there are almost as many different Rabelaisian styles as there are various species of composition to be met with in Rabelais; there is one style for straight narrative, one for the letter (see those of Grandgousier and Gargantua), one for the harangue (the *concio*), one for mock-verse, etc.

François could be an entertaining gossip when he chose, and this may have been one of the qualities which added to

his charm as a conversationalist. In his letters, he occasionally gives away, if not a secret, at least some inside news:

You ask if Pierluigi Farnese is the legitimate son or the bastard of Pope Paul III. I would inform you that the pope was never married, which is equivalent to stating that the aforementioned is, literally, a bastard.

The pope also had a marvelously beautiful sister. They still show, at the Palace,—in the main part of the house, where the Summists are, that portion which was constructed by Pope Alexander,—an image of Our Lady which is reported to have been made after the portrait and likeness of this sister. She was married to a gentleman who was a cousin of Lord Renzo. The husband being away at war, in connexion with the Naples expedition, Pope Alexander saw her; whereupon Lord Renzo, having found out how matters stood, took occasion to warn his cousin, pointing out that the latter should not permit such an insult to be offered their family by a Spanish pope, adding that if the husband stood for it, he himself would not. The short of it was, he killed her. At this, the present Pope Paul III. was loud in his lamentations; and to appease his grief and sorrow, they made him a cardinal while still very young, not to speak of certain other benefits which were conferred upon him.

At this time, the pope was keeping a Roman lady of the Casa Ruffina, by whom he had a daughter, who was married to Lord Bosso, Count of Santa Fiore, who died in this city since I have been here. By her, he had that one of the two little cardinals who is known as the Cardinal of Santa Fiore. In addition, he had a son, who is that same

Pierluigi concerning whom you inquire, who married the daughter of the Count of Cervello, by whom he had a whole houseful of children, among others, the little Cardinaling Farnese, who was made vice-chancellor upon the death of the late Cardinal de' Medici.

From what I have just told you, you will be able to understand very well why it is the pope does not care a great deal for Lord Renzo, and vice-versa; for Renzo does not trust him. It will also throw light on the big fuss between Lord Gian-Paolo of Certi, Lord Renzo's son, and the Pierluigi whom I have mentioned; for the latter would like to avenge the death of his aunt.

This accords with the traditional picture of the times: profligate popes, daggers, poison, and the love and slaying of beautiful women. The bishop asks a question, and François gives him an answer in full. Rome was what the latter formerly called it, the capital of the world. Even Paris, with its famous Schoolmen of the rue du Fouarre, who provided the attraction for such visitors as Ariosto, Dante and Petrarch, was by contrast a provincial backwater. Paris was on the road to becoming what it has been ever since, the intellectual capital of the world; but it was at Rome that the business which ran the world was transacted. And Geoffroy d'Estissac, enlightened Humanist that he was, was still a provincial prelate, and as such, naturally was interested in news of that great and glittering world beyond the Alps.

But François did more for the bishop than keep the latter in gossip. He also busied himself in connexion with a certain, to us obscure, affair concerning the living of one

"Dom Phillippes," in which Maillezais was interested, and he keeps his correspondent informed as to how things are going in connexion with this case. In despatching his letters, François sometimes handed them to an acquaintance who was leaving for France; but ordinarily, distrusting the bank-couriers who were the regular means of communication, he made use of the royal pouch:

You may rest assured that the packages I send you will be in good hands between here and Lyons; for I put them in the great Wax-Sealed Packet which is for King's business, and when the courier arrives at Lyons, that packet is opened by Monsieur the Governor. His secretary, who is one of my very good friends, then picks up the package which I have properly addressed on the outside, and takes it to Michel Parmentier. . . .

I quite agree with what you write me, that it is best not to place them in the hands of the bankers, from fear that they may be tampered with or opened. I am inclined to think that, the first time you write me, especially if it is on some matter of importance, it might be just as well for you to write directly to Parmentier and, in your letter, to enclose a crown for him, as a reward for forwarding your packets to me and for sending mine on to you. A very little sometimes serves to put good folks under obligation, and to render them more ardent for the future, when some matter demanding urgent dispatch shall arise.

As we have seen, François himself kept Parmentier and his wife "in little gifts."

From all this, it is evident that the Maître was swamped in the minutiae of daily living. It is sad, but a fact, that

when a man reaches a certain age these minutiae, taking on a tremendous importance, appear to rise up and overwhelm him. "Africa always offers something new." Rabelais, in his *Gargantua,* had quoted the old Greek proverb; and his phrasing of it, some centuries later, entranced Flaubert, who found it "full of ostriches, giraffes, hippopotamuses, negroes and gold dust" (*Correspondence* II., p. 312). But where is François' Africa now? He is no longer in quest of plane-trees and "*africanae*"; his concern is with seeds, salads, absolutions, the regularization of benefices, papal-court gossip, and the bribing of messengers. He had reached the age of forty.

III

Not that his interests were altogether petty; for he was at the heart of the world, and events which were to influence the destiny of the world were shaping themselves under his eyes. This was the day of Paul III. and of the "divine" Pietro, with that journalistic god Pasquino holding forth in the public square, and with the *condottiere* riding supreme in politics and in letters—has not Aretino been called "the *condottiere* of literature"? It was the Italy of Ercole d'Este and of Alessandro de' Medici. It was the world of Francis, and Charles, and Henry, and the German Lutheran princes. Charles had just defeated Barbarossa, and had announced his intention of coming on to Naples and to Rome. The Holy City trembled, and none trembled more than the inmate of the Vatican. It was the want of money, as much as anything else, with the prospect of terrific expenditures, that made the Holy Father quake.

And he was not the only one who needed cash. Everybody appeared to be suffering from an acute attack of Panurge's complaint. The situation at this time has a peculiar economic ring.

He (the Emperor) is at present at Naples, and will leave, according to word he has sent the Pope, on the sixth of January. This whole town is now filled with Spaniards; and the Emperor has despatched to the Pope an ambassador extraordinary to advise the Holy Father of his coming. The Pope is giving him half the Palace, as well as the whole of the borough of St. Peter, for the use of his imperial followers, and has caused three thousand Roman style beds, that is, beds with mattresses, to be put in readiness. For the city has been short of them ever since it was sacked by the lansquenets. And the Pope also has laid in a supply of hay, straw, oats, spelt and barley, all that he was able to lay hands upon, as well as wine, all that has come in down at Ripa.

It will cost him plenty in my opinion, and is an expense he might very well worry along without, considering his present poverty, which is great and glaring—indeed, he is poorer than any pope for the last three hundred years. . . . The Emperor has announced that it is not his intention that his followers should live on bounty, that is, without paying; but rather, on the Pope's bounty. And this it is which grieves the Holy Father; for he understands very well that, by this statement, the Emperor means that he wishes to see in what manner and with what degree of warmth the Pope will treat him and his people.

And as for Charles:

The truth of the matter is this, that the Emperor is short of money and is looking for it on all hands; he is, accordingly, trimming everybody he can (taille tou le monde qu'il peut) *and borrowing everywhere. When he arrives down here, he is going to demand something of the Pope, that is obvious enough. He will set forth that he has been conducting all these wars against Barbarossa and the Turk with the object of assuring the safety of Italy and of the Holy Father, with the natural inference that it is incumbent upon the latter to contribute.*

Money, money, money,—it runs through all these letters: the Pope needs money; the Emperor needs it; François himself needs it. Alessandro de' Medici has a scheme for confiscating the vast wealth of Filippo Strozzi; he attempts to have Strozzi assassinated, and fails; Strozzi goes to see the Emperor and offers the latter 400,000 ducats to pay spies for reporting on the Duke. The Duke of Ferrara goes to see the imperial visitor regarding the investiture and recognizance of his estates: "I am afraid he will be forced to throw away the golden crowns which his late father left him, and that the Pope and the Emperor will pluck him as they happen to feel like it." The Duke asked "an excessive sum . . . notwithstanding the fact that he already had knocked down fifty thousand crowns," etc. François is learning, at this period, the motive power of money; and money is something which he himself is to stand in need of, more and more, from now on.

He witnesses and describes the preparations which are being made for Charles' coming: the construction of a new *via triumphalis*, extending from the St. Sebastian Gate to the Campidoglio (the *templum pacis*), the Emperor being scheduled to pass under the ancient arches of Constantine, Vespasian, Titus, Numerianus and the rest; the tearing down of houses (the owners standing the cost) and the razing of churches, in order to construct and level off this road. He is alive, too, to all the various legations, from Ferrara, Florence and elsewhere, which pass through Rome en route to the Emperor at Naples. This does not look good for France; it means that the political balance of power in Italy, between Francis and Charles, has been broken. Rabelais is also aware of events outside of Italy, as far away as Portugal, through the repercussions of those events at Rome. It was hardly a time to be doing any botanizing or archæologizing, when the fate of nations was at stake.

He did find the time to take up the study of Arabic, with the Bishop of "Caramith," but appears to have gained only a very superficial knowledge of that language. He became acquainted with certain interesting persons, such as Philibert de l'Orme, the archæologizing architect, and the traveller, André Thevet, who mentions Rabelais in his *Cosmographia*. But there is a certain fugitive note in connexion with all these adventures; the vocations of youth have become the avocations of maturity.

The Emperor's coming had been set for the end of February, 1536, though he did not actually arrive until the 5th. of April. On February 29, the Cardinal du Bellay, accompanied only by a few armed followers, secretly left Rome and set out for France, to warn Francis I. of the

course events were taking in Italy. The cardinal's household did not follow until the 11th. of April; and so, it is possible that François was present when Charles made his impressive entry. He may, of course, have accompanied Du Bellay; in which case he arrived at Grenoble on March 9, and at Lyons, where the court then was, the following day; this, however, does not seem likely.

On the second day of June following, the imperial ambassador was given his congé, and the war with Charles was on. On July 21, Du Bellay was appointed Governor of Paris and the Ile-de-France, and began fortifying the city against the possibility of an attack.

In the interim, François' successor in the Hôtel-Dieu at Lyons, Pierre du Castel, is drawing his first four months' pay, amounting to ten pounds, as we see from the records of the institution under date of July 3.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

TRUNDLING THE DIOGENIC BARREL

For from now on, I am sure, the boundaries of France are going to be superbly extended, and the French are assured of peace; until I scarcely can refrain from adopting the opinion of our friend Heraclitus, when he states that war is the father of all good things; and I am inclined to think that war in Latin is called beautiful, not by antiphrasis, as certain patchers of old Latin junk would have us believe, for the reason that they themselves can see no beauty in it, but absolutely and simply, for the reason that in war, every species of the good and beautiful comes out, while all varieties of ugliness and evil are betrayed. For which reason it was, the wise and pacific King Solomon could not think of any better way to picture for us the unspeakable perfection of Divine Wisdom than by comparing it to the order of an army in camp.

PROLOGUE TO BOOK THIRD

FRANÇOIS, then, shortly after his return, found his country plunged into war. Preparations were being made on all sides; Charles had invaded Provence, and plans were being whipped into shape for the defence of the northern and eastern frontiers, as well. The whole nation was involved in that stir and bustle, that flutter and clutter which

the undertaking of a righteous war, and particularly a war "for the national defence," always evokes. War then was little different, in its psychological aspects, from what it is today. There were "slackers," then as now, and slackers were treated then as they are now; while literary men who were out of the fray, like their brothers of the present, felt called upon to apologize and to explain.

And so, we are naturally anxious to see what is happening to our pacifist of the *Gargantua*, he who, in Picrochole's ludicrous dream of world-conquest and the hilarious Cake-Bakers' War, would seem to have smothered the whole institution in lasting ridicule. But literary pacifists, it seems, are quite apt to make an exception when their own country steps in. Rabelais, we must remember, was very close to the Cardinal du Bellay, who was at this moment the active leader of France; and as his former bent against war had been determined by his Humanist sympathies, so now, his personal sympathies, not to speak of other possible considerations, impelled him to look upon *this war* as a holy and a righteous one. In his *Third Book*, which was to appear ten years later, he puts himself on record, in the Prologue, regarding the last struggle with Charles, which began in 1542. After comparing himself to a useless Diogenes, trundling his barrel:

Not having been drafted for the offensive ranks, since they thought me, apparently, too imbecile and too impotent, and on the other hand, not having been given any defensive employment, even if it was only carrying the hod, hiding away the sod, turning the wheel or breaking the clod (all of which would have been the same to me), I have felt that

it was a more than ordinarily shameful thing to be looked upon as an idle spectator by so valiant, capable and loyal a people, now in the full view of all Europe engaged in acting out this illustrious fable and tragi-comedy, without bestirring myself to finish this nothing that is left me, but which is my all.

There is more, much more, of the same sort. Either Maître François has been converted or— But we forget: *this* was a righteous war.

By the middle of August, the excitement had died down somewhat. François seems not to have been inclined to resume his duties at the Hôtel-Dieu; or possibly, the place was no longer open to him. Moreover, he had laid other plans. He had obtained the papal brief in order that he might be able to enter a Benedictine monastery; and both he and his patron, Du Bellay, had something in mind. François had found a protector to whom it behooved him to keep as close as possible; and as for the cardinal, he still had his sciatica. The latter was now sufficiently free from the cares of war and state to be able to resume the direction of his diocese. François had visited him at the charming Abbey of Saint-Maur-les Fossés, and must have fallen in love with the countryside, being attracted also by the accessibility of the site from Paris. Three years before, Du Bellay had obtained from Clement VII. a bull for the secularization of this abbey, the revenue to be attached to that of his own bishopric; and Saint-Maur then had become a collegiate church, with the Bishop of Paris for its dean. A point to be noted is that all the monks who had entered the monastery prior to the bull of secularization became,

as of right, prebendal canons. In accordance with the original plan, there were to be eight of these canons; but when the papal document finally came through, in August, 1536, it was found that a ninth place had, mysteriously, been created for François, and the latter officially became a canon of Saint-Maur. This was, as M. Clouzot remarks, a bit of sleight-of-hand of which Panurge himself need not have been ashamed. The other canons naturally resented the new-comer's intrusion, inasmuch as they saw their incomes being diminished. They ended by taking the matter up with Rome, and the result of the whole affair was a second *Supplicatio* of Rabelais', also addressed to Paul III., in which the petitioner seeks the papal sanction for his canonicate.

We do not know what the pope's answer was; but François, in any event, did not remain long at Saint-Maur; the road was calling, and he answered. But one thing he had gained from his dabbling in ecclesiastic politics: he had shaken his monk's robe from his shoulders for good; he was now free of his monastic vows, with the status of a secular priest.

II

In February, 1537, François is at Paris, attending a banquet of literary men given to Étienne Dolet. Dolet was one of the most vigorous and fiery characters of his age,—"the martyr of the Renaissance" he has been called. A dubious tradition made him the son of Francis I. His education had been a wide one, and he had studied, among other places, at Padua under Simon de Villanova. Returning to France to take up the study of law at the University of

Toulouse, in 1532, he had been elected imperator of the French "nation" at the university, and had proceeded to pronounce such violent philippics against the other "nations," notably the Gascons and the Aquitanians, and even against the city of Toulouse itself, that the parliament of that city had banished him. He found his way to Lyons in the late summer of 1534, and François probably met him there in that year, upon returning from his first Italian trip.

Dolet was taken into the inner literary circle at Lyons, a circle which included Guillaume and Maurice Scève, the poets, Benoît Court, known for his commentaries on the *Arrests d'Amour*, or Decrees of the Court of Love, Guillaume du Choul, Jérôme Fondule and other scholars and Humanists. Dolet was a tremendous worker, and soon entered the lists as the foe of Erasmus in the Ciceronian controversy, Erasmus being the author of an anti-Ciceronian dialogue, the *Ciceromastryx*. In 1536, the two folio volumes of his *Commentarii Linguae Latinae* had appeared. This work had been dedicated to Francis, and as a result, the King had conferred upon its author a sort of literary and editorial carte blanche for the next ten years to come. Dolet then was to enter upon a period of great scholarly activity; but before the ten years were up, his pursuits were to be interrupted by the machinations of his enemies, who were to procure his repeated arrest, and finally his execution, on the charge of atheism. This, however, and fortunately, was in the future on that evening when the literary lights of Paris assembled to do him honour.

Rabelais and Dolet had much in common, in spite of the latter's attitude toward Erasmus of Rotterdam; for the Ciceronianus dispute was, after all, a literary falling-out,

and as such is not to be taken too seriously from the personal point of view, though Dolet's temperament was such a one as impelled him to put all the energy he possessed—and he possessed more than his fair share—behind anything upon which he entered. But he and François could not have helped being drawn together by their mutal love of the new Humanities. Dolet was destined to become Maître François' unauthorized publisher, for he was a printer as well as a poet and a grammarian; and as a printer, he published everything from the New Testament to Rabelais. There was a tradition later to the effect that it was partly for having printed a certain passage in the Maître that Dolet was put to the torture, strangled and burned, in the Place Maubert, in August, 1546. In any case, the two men must have been drawn together on the side of character, as well as of literary and scholarly tastes. The more easy-going François should have liked the other's fire, the spirit of the man who took as one of his mottoes, "*Préserve moi, Seigneur, des calomnies des hommes.*" Rabelais, likewise, notwithstanding his professional Thelemite creed, had little confidence in the species; but he took it out in ridicule. There was just sufficient of a balance of opposites to have made the two friends, when, on that August day in 1534, Dolet, footsore and heartsick, wandered into Lyons. Was it François who sent him to his own first publisher, Sebastien Gryphe? In any event, it was Gryphe who, in 1535 published Dolet's *Dialogues de Imitatione Ciceroniana.* In after years, a coolness was to grow up between the two writers, but on this night they were friends.

The occasion of the banquet was the freeing of Dolet, by royal pardon, from a charge of murder. On New Year's eve,

the poet, coming home late at night, had been attacked in the street at Lyons, and in the struggle which ensued, had slain a painter by the name of Guillaume Compaing. Before dawn, Dolet was on his way to Paris, where friends at once set about interceding for him with the king. A pardon had been granted on the 19th. of February, and the celebration followed.

The list of guests was a distinguished one. Dolet himself has left us the roster in one of his pieces of Latin verse:

"There were to be seen those men who, with reason, have been termed the lights of France: Budé, who takes first place of all for his learning; Berauld, of superior mind and gifted speech; Danès, illustrious by reason of the varied nature of his learning; Toussaint, who has been called the living library; Macrin, for whom the art of verse holds no secrets; Bourbon, equally rich in poetic treasure; Visagier, who holds out such splendid hopes for scholars; Marot, that Gallic Vergil, who possesses the divine afflatus of poetic inspiration; and finally, François Rabelais, the honour and glory of medicine, who is able to recall the dead from the very gates of the tomb and bring them back to life."

Of those mentioned, Danès and Toussaint were noted as Hellenists, Berauld (or Berault) as a Latinist. Salmon Macrin we have met before; he, Nicolas Bourbon de Vandoeuvre, and Visagier were neo-Latin poets.

Rabelais, it will be noticed, is mentioned not as a man of letters, but as a physician. His fame in this respect was now an assured one; he was, it may be, one of the best known members of his profession in France. Where he once was known as a "man of great Greek and Latin learning," he is now thought of as one who can call back the dead.

The men whom François met at the dinner this night were not, by any means, mere chance acquaintances. They were in the habit of alluding to him in their works. Not all of them, it is true, saw him through to the end; but that has happened in the case of friends. There was Visagier who, after defending the Maître against Scaliger in a Latin epigram this same year, saw fit to reverse his opinion some two years later. Marot cites Rabelais as among the poets of his age, and Bourbon addresses to him an ode.

François has achieved popularity, and his popularity is to grow for the next year. His two Italian trips in the close company of Du Bellay, the powerful, had given him something of a strategic position in society. We find other writers referring to him. Bouchet follows Marot's example by rhyming Rabelais with Saint-Gelais; Gilbert Ducher mentions him in an epigram to "divine" philosophy; Paul Augier of Carentan includes the Maître in a wholesale dedication of his verses.

And now, François' own thoughts revert to that as yet uncaptured doctor's bonnet; and he turns his steps once again in the direction of Montpellier, in quest of an "antique liripipium."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

"DEAR DOCTOR"

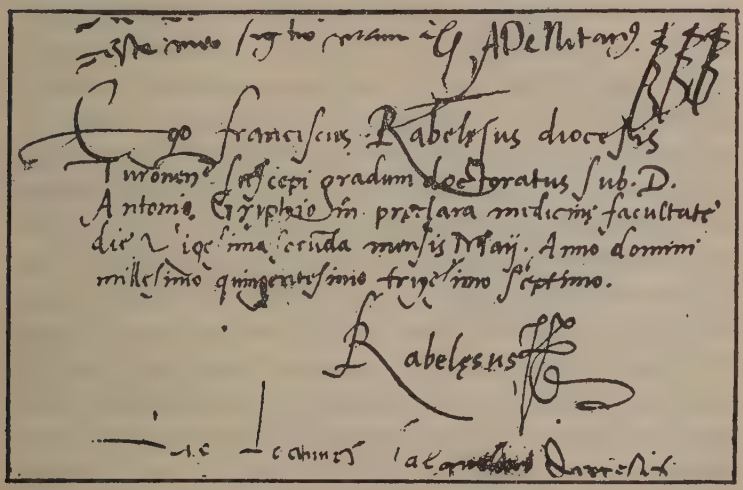
Hubertus celsa medicorum languet in urbe;
Pharmaca languentem nulla juvare queunt.
Tu potes: haud ullo, ni fallat opinio, morbo,
Est desiderio languidus ille tui.
Fronte serenabis dulci, pentitusque recedet
Qui toto mixtus corpore languor erat.

SUSSANNÉE: LUDI

I

ALL his life long,—certainly, from early monastic years,—François Rabelais had cherished a dream, a dream which was destined to be realized, but in rather touchingly modest a fashion, shortly before his death. That dream was none other than: a decent living in the Church. It seemed now, after the affair of the canonry at Saint-Maur, that the dream would have to be abandoned. How, then, *was* he to gain a livelihood? Literary returns in those days were practically nil. An author was lucky if, when his book came out, he received a neatly worded note of thanks from his publisher; royalties there were, one might say, none; the printer or publisher and the bookseller took whatever profits accrued. There appeared, therefore, to be nothing left but medicine. Not that François was averse to his calling,—not by any means; he had been practising it with flattering

success for a number of years past. But still,—a living in the Church, under the comfortably sheltering wing of an aquiline Du Bellay. That might have been preferable. It would have meant comfort, which Maître François liked, and it would have left the latter a margin of leisure for learned and literary, Humanistic pursuits. Or it may, quite conceivably, be that he was simply tired of it all, tired of the dusty foot and of running through fairs as one does through a market.



"Most Zealous of Physicians"
(*Autograph Registration of Rabelais upon Taking His Doctorate, at Montpellier, the 22nd. of May, 1537*)

Medicine did not mean, probably, a vast amount of profit, —we have seen that François was technically forbidden by the Church, whose son he still was, to practise his profession for gain—but it meant at least a berth, a placement, a niche in the world; and that was something for a man of

forty-one; it was inconvenient having no sort of classification, not being able to say either "I am Dr. Rabelais" or "I am Father Rabelais, Curate of So-and-So." The world seems always to have demanded something of the sort, and doubtless will go on demanding it. Rabelais may be said to have been a "misfit," in the sense in which a man who is being constantly hounded by his own restless and roving temperament, a something within him which keeps saying "Go!" is always a misfit, in any imaginable scheme of things. Such a one's business in life, his ineluctable mission, would seem to be that of being a misfit. Such a drama, after a programmed "Some years (or some centuries) elapse," makes good closet reading, whether the central figure be a Baudelaire or a Lord Byron; but it is a bit hard on the protagonist while the curtain is up. In some cases, perhaps more often, the misfit becomes an "enemy of society," even though a purely literary one; but in François, what we have is a normal, healthy, animal and, with it all, intelligent personality, and one, moreover, with a native zest for life and with a belief in the therapeutic value of laughter, being battered by the unreasonableness of a world which is a good deal more likely to be irritated by a laugh than it is by a poetic curse or two. Rabelais' "batterings" are, of course, not to be unduly magnified; but on the other hand, we possess very little knowledge of the battles that were his. The ventripotent creator of a dynasty of gullets is in much the same boat as the fat man; one never thinks of him, somehow, as deserving of sympathy, and if he asks for it, all he gets is a laugh.

And if he was to go on as a physician, his status there too must be established and regularized. Indeed, ever since

he went to Italy the second time, François seems to have had upon his mind this securing of a recognized place in life. He first went to the trouble and expense of having his years of "apostasy" wiped out by papal absolution. All then seemed roseate: he would reside with his friend, the Cardinal, as a secular canon of Saint-Maur; but the other canons, unfortunately, had objected. Another *Supplicatio*, the outcome of which we do not know, while we do know that, shortly afterward, François left Poitou and returned to Montpellier. His monk's frock was gone, and he was left —a priest without a living, a "Doctor" without a degree. He would get the degree. He had been making free use of the title for some five or six years past, even in his papal Prayer; it was, perhaps, about time. He was known to the Humanists of France as a medical man, and a distinguished one; yet he had no right to call himself doctor. It should be remarked, however, that this unauthorized employment of the title was not exactly an uncommon thing, and usually passed unquestioned where there was no doubt as to the practitioner's abilities. M. Clouzot believes that the degrees of licentiate and doctor of medicine which François is shortly to receive from Montpellier may have been merely honorary ones, and that the Maître may have completed his professional studies some while before at another institution; but there is nothing to confirm any such hypothesis as this.

II

By April 3, 1537, François had fulfilled the requirements for his licentiate, though there is no record on the university register of his having been granted the degree. On the

22nd. of May following, he was admitted to the doctorate, his official sponsor being Antoine Griphe.

The conferring of the doctorate at Montpellier was a colourful affair. After a series of six strenuous examinations, covering a period of three days, a one-hour test being given each morning and evening, the candidate, having received a two-thirds faculty vote, was ready for his *actus triumphalis*. The ceremony took place in the Church of Saint-Firmin, and was heralded the evening before by the ringing of the great bell. There was an academic procession, followed by Latin addresses and the presentation of diplomas, after which the newly created doctor distributed gloves or sweetmeats among those present. The doctor's bonnet was one of black cloth with a tassel of bright-coloured silk. To conclude the ceremony, the president had the new doctor seated at his side, while he extended greetings and the benediction. And this, undoubtedly, was the ritual by which François Rabelais became a physician.

François, now Dr. Rabelais, at once entered upon the active practice and the teaching of medicine; and it was not long before his marvellous cures began to be talked about, in southern France, at Narbonne and elsewhere. As an instructor, he attracted considerable attention by his dissection of the corpse of a hanged man. We find Étienne Dolet writing a poem on the subject and felicitating the gallows' victim, who was fortunate enough to have fallen into the hands of one so learned. Dissections at this time were something new; they were not utterly unheard of, but they were extremely rare, and never failed to occasion comment when they took place. The on-lookers, for one thing, found it

difficult to accustom themselves to the nauseous odor which came from the cadaver.

There is no question as to Rabelais' ability both as a physician and as a surgeon (had not Pope Paul, by the way, forbidden him to employ either bistoury or cautery?). Salmon Macrin and other contemporary writers bear witness to his skill. And modern medical men have found him not only abreast of his time, but if anything, a little ahead of it. An American physician, Dr. Isador Coriat, writing in the *Annals of Medical History*, lays special stress upon Maître François' competence in connexion with the diseases of syphilis and mercurial stomatitis from inunctions; and the same writer points out that the creator of Dr. Rondibilis (See Book Third, Chapter XXX.) was familiar with the uterine origin of hysteria; he also credits Rabelais, on the psychologic side, with the destruction of anagogic dream interpretation and the discovery of the value of laughter as an emotional release.

Dr. François also won distinction as a botanist. The Maître's old biographer, Antoine Leroy, goes off into a long eulogy on this score, and modern specialists have asserted that his tribute was a justified one. De Candolle, in his *Théorie Élémentaire*, observes that Rabelais is in advance of all the other writers of his day in the matter of botanical nomenclature and the origin of the names of plants, while M. Léon Faye, M. le Comte Jaubert and others have expanded upon the same theme.

There is an anecdote that is not without its interest at this point. The scene is the University of Montpellier; and in the Faculty room, the learned professors are listening to

a thesis *De Herbis et Plantis Medicinalibus* (On Medical Plants and Herbs). François becomes impatient at listening to so much bad science, and shows his impatience unmistakably. The dean perceives this, and invites Dr. Rabelais to take a part in the argument. The latter at first modestly declines, but is eventually unable to keep out of it. The battle is on, and Rabelais speaks so forcefully and to the point that the enthusiasm of the auditors rises high. The end of it is, François walks off with the honours of the day.

It is a well known fact, however, that learning and skill alone, while they may make an instructor, do not make the successful practitioner; and François was highly successful in his practice, if all accounts be true. He evidently possessed that personal magnetism toward his patients with which certain doctors are blessed. Hubert Sussannée, in the verses to Rabelais which are quoted at the beginning of this chapter, states that he was "languishing" in the "city of doctors," and that no drugs appeared to do his ailment any good: "But you can; for if I am not mistaken, your patient is languishing from no other disease than the desire to see you. As soon as he catches a glimpse of your cheerful countenance, that languor which, up to then, he had felt all over his body will vanish quite." Was it any wonder that François was "*cher docteur*" to the countryside for miles around? The therapeutics of a smile were proving effective. But it may be noted that, so far as the record goes, his patients were all of the masculine sex; we never hear of his having treated a woman. Would he have made a good "ladies' doctor"? For there is a difference. Women do not care for Rabelais the writer; would they have cared to have at their bedsides a physician who could write:

The Supplementum Supplementi Chronicorum *states that Gargamelle thereupon died of joy. So far as I am concerned, I know nothing about this, and care still less, about her or any other female?*

On the 27th. of September, 1537, François took part in the convocation of the medical faculty, at which the program was laid out for the course of lectures known as the *Grand Ordinaire*, which ran from the Feast of St. Luke (October 18) to Palm Sunday eve. It was part of the requirements for the new doctor to give a one-semester course; and Rabelais chose for his subject the *Prognostics* of Hippocrates, lecturing directly from the Greek text, as he had done before in the case of the *Aphorisms*. This was still an experiment, inasmuch as no other instructor had tried it in the interim. These lectures were well attended, as we learn from a letter of Jean de Boyssonné.

Medicine with Rabelais was no drudging occupation. That he put his soul into it, we see from an anecdote of Sussannée's: "When I passed through Montpellier, Rabelais, who at that time was lecturing in Greek on the *Prognostics* of Hippocrates, insisted that I should spend a few days with him. And this was the manner in which he undertook to persuade me: 'My dear Sussannée, if you do not care to make urine-analyses (*etiam si nolis lotium inspicere*) by way of earning that title which you carry around with you (*legum et medicinae doctor*), you might at least, as many of the old physicians did, pay off your debt to the state, and be a credit to yourself at the same time, by publishing useful treatises and going in for research in diseases and their treatment." This has a decidedly modern ring: the exhortation to publication and research.

While he was at Lyons during this period, in the summer of 1537, an imprudent letter of François' had come near interrupting his medical activities and landing him in jail. In writing to a correspondent in Rome, who chanced to be under surveillance, the Maître had given a little too substantial an account of what was going on at home. In a letter dated August 10, the Cardinal of Tournon, to whom Dolet had dedicated the poetic account of his banquet, advised the Chancellor Du Bourg of the state of affairs: "My Lord, I am handing you a letter which Rabelais sent to Rome. From it, you will see what sort of news he is giving to one of the worst characters that there is in Rome. I have notified him that he is not to leave this city until I have learned your will in the matter. And if he had not mentioned me in the letter, as well as the King and Queen of Navarre, I should have had him thrown into prison to serve as an example to all such news-pedlars." The country was then in a state of war, and the Cardinal of Tournon had been appointed lieutenant-general over all the provinces of the Southwest. The gravity of François' position in the matter may readily be inferred; but he seems to have got out of the scrape, as he had a gift for doing; for by September 27, he is on hand for the faculty meeting.

III

What effect, it may now be asked, did the science of medicine produce upon the mind of Rabelais? For it surely is unnecessary to insist upon the point that a man's profession, his daily job, does exert an inevitable influence over his thinking processes and his view of life. Some of the ef-

fects in François' case already have been noted. It was, as we have seen, from a naturalistic medicine that he derived that therapeutic of laughter which he carried over into the literary field. His critical spirit, too, was first developed largely in medicine.

"In the medical field," says Professor Lefranc, "as later in other branches, his critical turn of mind asserted itself, while waiting for the time when satire should equip him with a powerful weapon of propaganda, and he should be able to carry over into the religious, social and juridical fields the same spirit of independence and concern for a lucid and living reality."

Dr. Coriat dwells upon Maître François' freedom from repression, and quotes Ellis' *Dance of Life* with regard to those books which, none too pleasingly, reveal us to ourselves. He speaks of the "dream-like character of Rabelais' thinking," asserts that the mechanism of wit and the dream (Bergson's "comic absurdity . . . of the same class as dreams") are essentially alike, since the release of repressions makes for a sense of humour, and then goes on to speak of François' "medical satire":

" . . . the physician and satirist of medical subjects unconsciously feel that the erotic can be emphasized, even rather broadly and obscenely, without shocking the public morals, because of the peculiar relation of the physician to society and the fact that society tolerates less sex repression in speaking of strictly medical subjects. Obstetrical or sexual subjects are very prominent in medical satire, as shown in the various designations referring to the sexual, obstetrical or excremental organs, functions or material."

The same writer cites, as an example of Rabelais' "medi-

cal humour," the word "incornifistibulate," which he maintains is "a dream-like word."—"The reader of Rabelais," he adds, "is actually in the sub-conscious," as he is with James Joyce. He sums up Rabelais' personality as two-fold: obscenity, or the release from repressions manifesting itself as wit, a reaction intensified by the physician's calling; and the sublimation of the foregoing "in the highest ethical and moral thinking."

Dr. Coriat, it is easy to deduce, is not simply a medical man, but a Freudian, and the reader is accordingly free to make whatever deductions he thinks are in order.

Another American physician, Dr. Douglass W. Montgomery (writing in *The Medical Record*), thinks that François' grossness is due to his profession, and to his hospital experiences, giving us the postscript that Rabelais is not gross but "contemporaneously objective." He believes the interruptions in the Maître's work may have been due to his practice—the habit of writing at table, which is mentioned in the Prologue to the *Gargantua* (he probably dictated his compositions). In any case, the author of the *Gargantua and Pantagruel* has never lost his popularity with his professional brethren.

Rabelais, we may believe, was not greatly given to the minutiae of research. Despite the fact that the invention of certain surgical instruments is attributed to him, his was not, I think, the post-graduate-seminar type of mind, nor do his Hippocratic texts and his botanical etymologizings alter the case. His stroke in medicine as in literature was broader, freer, more popular, a trifle showier. He possessed the empiric skill of the successful practitioner; but that

cheerful countenance of his and the ability to cure a languorous patient by his mere presence do not go with the other sort of thing. When was a research specialist ever known to laugh?

CHAPTER TWENTY

CARDINALS AT A CHRISTENING

Quem cernis tumulo exiguo requiescere vivens
Romanos habui pontificos famulos.
BOYSSONNÉ: ELEGORUM LIBER (Toulouse MSS.)

DESPITE the fact that he today comes near to being (with the exception always of a handful of scholars and a stray artist or two) the exclusive property of the erotica-hound and the "curiosa"-collector, there would appear to have been no women of determining influence in Maître François' life. The great exponent of the savoury old "*gaul-oise*" tradition was, essentially, a man's man, and the monk of Fontenay-le-Comte remained very much alive in him until the end. Women simply did not figure in his scheme of things. His characteristic scrapes, as we have by this time seen, have had to do with his being absent from his diocese without leave, with his having spoken his mind a bit too freely, in his *Gargantua*, on the subject of reform in the Church, with an imprudent gossipy letter sent outside the lines and to a suspicious character in time of war, etc. There have been, so far, no amours, no Casanovan adventures of any sort. Any biographer undertaking, in the manner of a certain modern French school, to do a "love-life" of Pantagruel's creator would have a hard time of it.

Rabelais' personal attitude toward women was, we may imagine, very much that of Friar John, who, when he sees some pretty girls at the Decretalist party (Book Fourth, Chapter LIV.), would like to carry them off, but who does not go into a decline when he discovers that he is not to have them. As for marriage,—which, of course, was out of the question with a cleric, though in those Reformation-muddled times, it did sometimes occur,—he probably would have agreed with the Friar's sentiments expressed at the conclusion of the posthumous Fifth Book.

But while women did not mean anything in his life, this is not to say that he was, by any means, a sexual saint. There are few of those about at any time, and François did not lean to the ascetic. He simply did not overstress his women, in private life, any more than he did his wine or his food; he saved all three for his books, where they might become a triple and big-bellied theme for a sonata of laughter; and that very big-belliedness should make anyone who inclines to the doctrines of Herr Freud just a trifle suspicious.

But there is one incident of a faintly amorous hue in François' life,—one and only one, so far as our knowledge goes. Just where it comes in cannot be stated with exactitude, but it must have happened along about this time. While we do not know of any women in the Maître's life, we do know of one bastard son.

This was one Théodule, or Theodulus, Rabelais who died at the tender age of two. We should never have heard of him, had it not been for the Elegies (*Elegorum Liber: Hendecasyll. Liber Unus*) of Jean de Boyssonné, preserved with the latter's correspondence in the municipal library of

Toulouse. These poems, which do not appear to have been destined for publication, contain several sets of verses on the infant's death. One is in the form of a dialogue between the poet and the child, in which the poet inquires why the infant while still so young should have renounced the joys of existence. The infant replies that he has made such a renunciation, not from any hatred of life, but that he may live eternally in the Christ.

"Following these verses," notes M. Rathéry, "comes a distich which, for all the hyperbolic praise bestowed upon the father, leaves no doubt as to the paternity of the child."

This distich, translated, reads:

Lyons is his fatherland; Rabelais is his father; who does not know both is ignorant of the two greatest things in the world.

If there is any doubt left, there is a third piece which tends to remove it:

Under this narrow stone reposes the little Théodule, small of body, in age and of features, but great by reason of his father, that learned man, versed in all the arts which are befitting a man who is good, pious and respectable. The young Théodule, had it been given him to live, would have made that learning his own, and from the little fellow that he was, would have grown into a great man in his turn."

The episode, as we see it through De Boyssonné's verses, has a distinctly Victorian, Felicia Hemans flavour that is rather delicious. Who was the mother of this little Théo-

dule? Not the slightest trace of her. Was she a wench in some Lyons tavern? Or was she, possibly, a little higher up in the social scale? Whoever she was, her child was signally honoured by having his cradle surrounded with princes of the Church, as we learn from the De Boyssonné couplet: "He whom you now perceive at rest beneath this tiny mound once had Roman bishops as his attendants." Who were these red-hat-wearers, and were they there out of respect to the father alone, or to the mother as well? Silence again.

At any rate, the ecclesiastics of that day were scarcely in a position, most of them, to be uppish in such a matter, since many of them openly kept mistresses, while some even had gone so far as to marry. The spectacle, therefore, of a mere secular priest falling from grace and violating his vow of chastity was not one calculated to shock them. This was especially true of those with Humanist inclinations.

"In order to conform," says M. Plattard, "to the examples of classic antiquity, the sixteenth-century Humanists carried to the limit the free development of human personality. Physis, or Nature, who 'in her first pregnancy gave birth to Beauty and Harmony,' had reinstated the joys of the flesh in the face of mediæval anathemas."

The incident as a whole easily gives rise to any amount of objectionable moralizing, pro and con. It is best to leave it as it is: Rabelais had an illegitimate son who died in infancy, whose name was Théodule, and who had the honour of being visited by cardinals. That is all we know, "and all we need to know."

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

KINGS AND CHOLER, DOGS AND SWINE

Everyone knows that Agrippa, Villanovanus, Dolet and their kind have always pridefully contemned the Gospel; they have ended by falling into such a madness that they not only have let loose their execrable blasphemies against Jesus Christ and His doctrine, but even have held that, so far as thir souls were concerned, they were in no wise different from dogs and swine. Others, such as Rabelais . . . after having tasted of the Gospel, have been struck by a similar blindness. . . . But they are mad dogs, who vomit forth their ordures in the very presence of the majesty of God, and who have endeavoured to pervert all religion.

JOHN CALVIN

I

POPE PAUL III. now felt that the revolt in the Church had gone far enough, and that it was time to call some kind of halt on all the schisms and heresies which were deflowering, or threatening to deflower, St. Peter's vineyard. He desired, at one stroke, to wipe out Lutheranism, Calvinism and all the other menaces to ecclesiastic unity and peace, and to restore in its original integrity the Holy, Roman, Catholic and Apostolic communion. This meant that a reconciliation must first be effected between the warring princes of Chris-

tendom, and in particular, between Charles and Francis. After that, there might be a council— But first, there must be peace. He, accordingly, on the 18th. of June, 1538, held a conference with Francis at Nice, and on the 14th. of July following, effected a meeting between the King and the Emperor at Aigues-Mortes. The outcome appeared to be a happy one; it looked as though amity had been established between the two monarchs and churchly dissensions were about to end.

At this Aigues-Mortes meeting, François Rabelais was present, in the entourage of the King of France. We learn this from a letter which Antoine Arlier wrote to Étienne Dolet. In his prolix and elegant literary epistle, Arlier mentions by name only two persons as among those who had accompanied Francis to Aigues-Mortes, and who returned with him to Lyons; these two were the Humanist, traveller and diplomat, Christophe Richer, and Maître François.

Rabelais is now keeping royal company, and as we shall very shortly see, he is to become from now on a King's man.

Upon returning to Lyons, François renewed relations with that inner circle, the *sodalitium lugdunense*. This circle now included Dolet, Visagier, Ducher and others. That there was a close bond between them is indicated by the manner in which they log-rolled for one another in print. In Dolet's poems, for example, published at Lyons in this year, there is an allusion to the "*garum*," a sort of marinated fish-sauce or anchovy-paste, which the Maître had rendered slightly famous on account of its medicinal qualities. At some time or other, François had sent his friend a sample, accompanied by the following Latin epigram (in prose translation):

I am sending you this garum, *unknown to us, which the old physicians used to manufacture. You may add as much vinegar and as much oil as you like. There are cases where butter is more agreeable than oil. There is no remedy which will better rebuild a broken down constitution, when you have been too immersed in your books; no other is better adapted to getting rid of phlegm, and no other will give your belly greater ease. You will be surprised to find, when you have taken the* garum, *that no other salad, however savoury it may be, is pleasing to your palate.*

And Dolet replied with verses of thanks.

When an attempt had been made, following the publication of the *Gargantua*, to derive the name Rabelaesus from *rabie laesus*, "bitten with rabies," it had been Visagier who come forward with an epigram in which he declared that:

Non spirant rabiem, sed tua scripta jocos.

("Your writings do not breathe madness, but jollity.")

As for Nicolas Bourbon, possessed of an instinctive delicacy and a religious gravity, he was inclined at first to reproach Maître François for distracting the minds of the young from more serious pursuits; but he seems later to have altered his views, for he and Rabelais became warm friends.

II

Following that interview of Charles and Francis at Aigues-Mortes, the complexion of things religious and intellectual underwent a decided change in France. The pendulum had swung back from reform to orthodoxy; and un-

der royal instigation, a determined effort was made to root heresy out of the realm, once and for all. Whereas before, only a sovereign court had been permitted to pass on heresy cases, the meanest bailiff or seneschal in the land might now set himself up as a judge.

As for the Humanists, they were quick in perceiving the break which had occurred between the royal power and the Reformationists—François himself must have seen what was coming, as he stood that day in the presence of King and Emperor at Aigues-Mortes. It was evident that now a choice would have to be made, a choice between Catholicism as upheld in its traditional lineaments by the Sorbonne, Calvinism (for the *Institutes* had just been published) and what Calvin and his followers anathematized as "libertinism," which to them meant a practising form of atheism. What was to be the Humanists' choice? What choice was François Rabelais to make?

The men of the New Learning chose, for the greater part, to remain within the bosom of the Church, at least outwardly so. Most of them stuck to their benefices, and took matters very calmly on the whole. There was no mad rush into the ranks of the Calvinists; for the Humanists by this time had come to know Calvin and Calvinism for what they were. They knew that their own dream of the free life, based upon the chivalric principle of individual honour, had nothing in common with that Predestination which was thundered from Geneva. And the "predestinators," on their side, spurned the men who, like Dolet, had always "pridefully contemned the Gospel," or who, like Rabelais, having once "tasted" of it, had lapsed into an atheistic blasphemy. All this, for the Calvins of the time, was summed up and em-

bodied in the mouth-filling syllables, "libertinism." It is an epithet they have ever loved to hurl. No Abbey of Thélème for them, with its Epicurean tolerance.

It may be instructive to pause for a moment and inquire what the basis was for this charge. When we study the literary group to which François may be said to have belonged, a group which included, in addition to those writers already mentioned, Bonaventure des Periers and others, we find, as in the case of any "group" of the sort, that it is a bit difficult to make out individual characteristics in connexion with the common bond. This coterie had been rather distinctly Evangelic in the past; but they all now fell under the lash that was welded by Calvin, Postel and Castellion. The word "atheist" was also flung about very freely, a word which was to cost Dolet his life. But were these men a band of atheistic libertines? We find the name of Christ always printed in capital letters in their poems; but this does not mean a great deal, since beside it stand the names of pagan divinities. The members of this group were all Humanists, which meant that they had a deep veneration for classic antiquity; but as Humanists, they hoped, with Budé and others among their leaders, that a reconciliation would eventually be found possible between letters and religion. Religion to them, however, meant a return to something like a primitive Christianity, one unencumbered by traditional forms and ritualistic observances.

In this respect, they were quite deeply and sincerely religious; but one might, very frequently, never have guessed the fact from their conversation and, upon occasion, from their writings. Table-talk then was very free and easy, and if religion or philosophy happened to come up in the midst

of a lively conversation, the new subject received the same treatment as those topics which had gone before. In this sense, they were "libertines," but their libertinism was chiefly—talk. We are confronted here, in other words, with a question of social manners and the varying conversational fashions of centuries. Most of the writers did not carry their *propos* over into their work to any great extent. François did, and that is what makes him stand out; he is one of the pioneers of modern dialogue, and there was nothing for him to do but write as he talked, and as those about him were in the habit of talking.

Nevertheless, François is to be much more careful from now on as to how he talks on the printed page. This was also true of his fellow writers. Monks and theologians and the forms of popular devotion are for the most part let well enough alone after Aigues-Mortes. We even find the poets changing their dedications to conform to the new spirit that is in the air, while Dolet, in his *Genethliacum* (1538), comes out and declares his belief in God and in the immortality of the soul. What of François? He was now, thanks to Du Bellay, a protégé of the throne, and the throne was orthodox Catholic. Was the Maître to hold out? The evidence is that he did not hold out. That evidence is to be found in his Third and Fourth Books. Read them, and see how he either keeps discreetly silent, or else, tones down his jest. As for Book Fourth, with its assault on the papal decretals,—we are coming to that.

But to speak of Rabelais' "holding out" is to misrepresent the case. Why should he have held out? There is nothing to justify the assumption that he, any more than the other Humanists, was here guilty of either cowardice or

hypocrisy; though being strangled and then burned was, as anyone will grant, not a death to be fancied. No, the truth is simply, as stated above, the Humanists in general had seen the light so far as their relations to Protestantism went; they had had opportunity to see, clearly enough, that they were not for it nor it for them; they were not the Calvin kind, and Calvin was not their kind. And if, in revising his work for the 1542 and 1552 editions, the Maître saw fit to go back and tone down or elide many of the old sore-thumb passages, he was, it is true, playing safe (and in this, he was sensible); but it is also true that much of the old heat, the old rancour had died; the Sorbonnists did not seem quite such bogies as they once had loomed.

Catholicism, Calvinism, "Libertinism" (Atheism): such was François' and the others' choice. A libertine, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, he surely was not. We may now strike out Calvinism. It was either Catholic or under-cover atheist—or was there, possibly, some other ground?

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

DEATH AND LIFE PLAY ILL WITH FRIENDS

For certain souls are so noble, so precious and so heroic that, for a number of days in advance, the heavens give us an intimation of their dislodgment and death. . . . This was what we witnessed a number of days before the departure of the illustrious, generous and heroic soul of the learned and valiant Knight of Langey, of whom you have spoken.

Book Fourth, Chapter XXVII.

In order that you may not take false money for good (friend reader), the touched-up form for the natural, and the bastard and adulterated edition of this present work for the rightful and legitimate one, be advised that, while this work was still on the press, a copy of it was avariciously and underhandedly stolen by a certain plagiarist, a fellow capable of any crime; and by way of anticipating my own labour and the little profit I had hoped for, he has hastily printed this work, not only out of covetousness and a desire for his own good, but even more out of an envious longing to occasion loss and injury to another. . . . How comes it that such a one, who boasts of being so learned and so perfect a Ciceronian, should concern himself with printing these farces in the French tongue?

L'Imprimeur au Lecteur (Pierre de Tours Edition of the *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Lyons, 1542)

I

One might think that, now that François had attained something of a position in life, even though, as not infrequently happens, that position had nothing very solid behind it, his wanderings would have ceased. Was he not the King's own friend, and one of the best known medical men in France? He had shaken off his monk's robe, regularized his ecclesiastic status, obtained his doctor's hood. Was he to go on for ever running from here to there and from this thing to that? He was forty-two now; it was "about time" that he settled down.

And perhaps, he did settle down for a spell; but if he did, the biographic record does not show it. Instead, so far as we are concerned, he drops completely out of sight once more, this time for a period of two whole years, from August, 1538, to July, 1540. As M. Clouzot remarks, we may as well admit our ignorance as endeavour to fill up the gap with conjectures, which are, after all—conjectures. However, a number of these guesses have been made, and may be listed here:

1) That he was at Saint-Maur, where his friend, the Cardinal, was engaged in building operations;

2) That he was back in the Chinon country;

3) That he was at Turin with Guillaume du Bellay, who was seriously ill;

4) That he had resumed his medical practice at Lyons, where we find him being chosen as a student's "*pater.*"

A fact which lends some slight colour to the hypothesis that he was at Chinon is the fact that there occurred about

this time (14th. of August, 1539) a new division of Antoine Rabelais' estate. This may have been due to the fact that François, upon becoming a secular canon of Saint-Maur, had undergone a legal resurrection and had been re-established in his civil rights. He may have gone back to look after those rights; but it is not plausible that he should have spent the greater part of two years there.

The best explanation is the simplest one, and that is, that he went on practising medicine at Lyons. On July 23, 1540, he documentarily comes to life again; for we know from a letter of Guillaume Pellicier, Bishop of Montpellier and ambassador to Venice, that Rabelais was in Turin at this time. The circumstance that lets us know this holds an interest of its own. The bishop writes to consult the physician on a singular point of medicine. It is much the same question that is discussed in the third chapter of the *Gargantua*, as to eleventh-month births. Only in this instance, it was the case of a daughter born to Filippo Sacco, the President of Milan, five months and a half after he and his wife "had come together for the first time"—Sacco notes the time to the minute: "the 25th. of October, 1539, at four o'clock at night, before the full moon"; and the child had been born on the 13th. of April, 1540. What Sacco desired to know was: 1) if the child was legitimate; 2) if it would live. On the latter point, the wise ones told him simply to wait. As to the former question, that of the child's legitimacy, there was much rummaging of Greek and Latin, Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldean texts, when it was found that the Hippocratic passages which should have proved definitive varied in the manuscripts (call for a textual critic!). Sacco in despair had appealed to the bishop, and the latter had put the

matter up to Dr. Rabelais. What the Maître's decision was remains in darkness.

A few months later, in September or October of 1540, François once more found himself in hot water over his irrepressible tendency to epistolary gossip. A letter of his written to Barnabé de Voré, Sieur de la Fosse, who was then at Rome, was intercepted and transmitted to the court of France; the gossipy Jean de Boyssonné tells us all this in one of his own letters. This well might have meant a serious predicament, aside from the jeopardizing of the new-won favour at court. The contents of Rabelais' communication must have been of a delicate nature, and must have had to do with state secrets, of which it was perilous to speak. At any rate, François was put to some little trouble in setting things to right, and appears to have had some anxious moments. In a letter of December 19, Boyssonné reports having received a visit from the Maître at Chambéry; the latter was then on his way back to France, and was uncertain as to just what course he ought to pursue (*"Incertus erat quid ageret, cum hinc abiit."*).

How did François get out of this affair? Doubtless through the influence in his behalf of Jean du Bellay. On the 3rd. of April following, a letter of Pellicier's shows him to be back at Turin. His actual offence in the case seems to have been a lack of discretion and a lack of information as to just where his correspondent stood, the Sieur de la Fosse having recently veered in his politics.

Rabelais' presence in Turin at this period is to be explained by the fact that he was in the service of Guillaume du Bellay, Lord of Langey, the Cardinal's brother. Langey, in 1537, had been appointed governor of Turin, and was

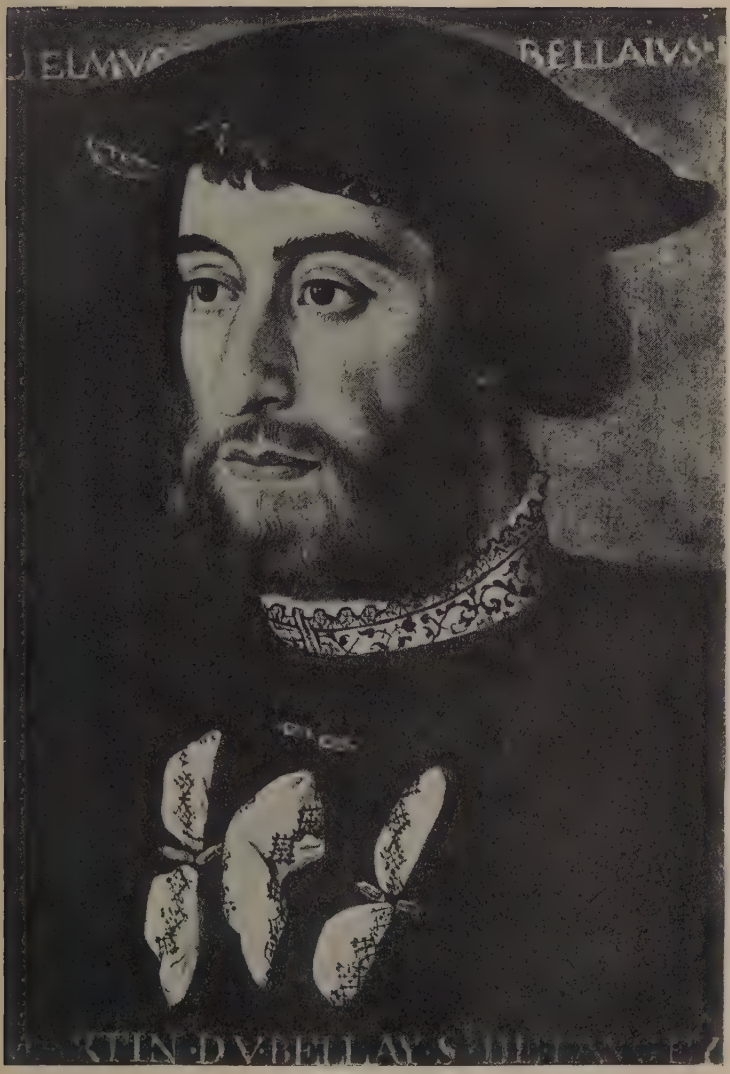
the acting governor of the province most of the time. He had returned to France in December, 1538, having been replaced by his brother, Martin du Bellay; but on the 20th. of September, 1539, he was on his way back again, and it was at this time, no doubt, that he picked up his brother's former physician, which explains a part at least of that blank interval from 1538 to 1540. All this was connected with the political game which Francis I. was playing in the Piedmont, the real objective being that of Louis XII., the conquest of the Duchy of Milan, the French throne being still bent upon asserting the claims of the House of Anjou.

Langey was a valuable man for the place. He was not only a good soldier, but an excellent administrator and a diplomat; his policy was one of conciliation and the peaceful conquest, if possible, of the hearts of the citizenry. On the personal side, he possessed certain qualities which should have endeared him to Rabelais and Rabelais to him. He was by way of being a Humanist, having begun life as a neo-Latin poet and having studied in Italy. François, so far as we can determine, was not merely Langey's physician, but his confidential secretary and his librarian, as well. It is the correspondence of the Venetian envoy which illumines the situation for us. Pellicier was in constant touch with both Langey and Rabelais. He was interested in the acquisition of Hebraic and Syriac manuscripts for Francis' library at Fontanebleau, and in the transcribing of Greek texts at Venice for the same purpose. He kept the Piedmontese governor in little gifts, and made use of the erudition of the governor's medical man. Rabelais' botanical knowledge is again brought into service, Pellicier writing

to him to ask for the roots of the *nardus celtica* and other rare plants suitable for transplantation to Venetian gardens.

In March, 1541, then, François is back at Turin, having returned there, probably, either from Paris or from Saint-Maur, where he had gone to consult with Cardinal du Bellay regarding his epistolary indiscretion. Early in November of the same year, Langey returned to France in order to lay before His Majesty the exact state of affairs in northern Italy. Rabelais went with him, as did a new friend whom François had acquired at Langey's court, Étienne Lorens, Seigneur de Saint-Ay, commandant of the castle of Turin. In passing through Lyons, the Maître stopped off to consult with François Juste, his publisher, concerning a new edition of the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel.*

It was now that Rabelais completed what remains the definitive revision of his first two books. His changed attitude toward things was reflected in the numerous and sometimes not unimportant changes which he made in his former text. Such terms as *theologiens*, *sorbonagres*, *sorbonicoles*, etc., were replaced by *sophistes*. It is to be noted, however, that the majority of his jocularities respecting the Scriptures were left standing, for the reason that they were not calculated to shock even an orthodox theologian; only in one or two instances, in connexion with Pantagruel's facetious sallies, was there any toning down. At one point, in the famous "Drunkards" chapter of the *Gargantua*, the author even wrote in what has since been looked upon as a gross and atheistic impiety: the play on Christ's words on the cross, "*Sitio*" (I am athirst).



"I Still Shudder, and My Heart Palpitates in Its Sheath"

(*Guillaume du Bellay, Chevalier de Langey, a Friend and Protector Whose Death Rabelais Deeply Mourned. Musée de Versailles*)

II

Upon returning to France, Rabelais accepted the invitation of Lorens (or Laurens) to be a guest at the latter's château amid the vine-clad hills overlooking the Loire, between Meung and Orléans. Near the château of Saint-Ay was the since renowned spring, where tradition has it that François was in the habit of going to do his writing, upon a round stone table. "We may add," says M. Burgaud des Marets, "that this fountain still exists, though it has lost its name. We have seen it; it is used by the women of the village for washing clothes." At the church of Saint-Ay were preserved the relics of that "little Zacchaeus" who is mentioned in the New Prologue to the Fourth Book.

At the château, François encountered another Humanist "*cénacle*," though a somewhat provincial one, perhaps. It was made up chiefly of members of the legal profession at Orléans. There was Daniel, Calvin's friend, whom we have met before, Claude Framberge, who is also known to us, and who was Sealer (*Scelleur*) of the bishopric, Jean Pailleron, the "tax-collector-elect" (*elu sur le fait des aides et tailles*), and Antoine Hullot, legal counsel for that confederation of River Loire merchants which had waged the puissant struggle with Gaucher de Sainte-Marthe. One should not forget Claude Massuau, translator of Rabelais' lost Latin work on the Lord of Langey's campaigns, the *Stratagèmes, c'est à dire Prouesses et Ruses de Guerre*. At least two members of this circle were active Protestants: Daniel and Hullot. It was to Daniel that Calvin had conveyed the news of the censuring of the *Pantagruel*, back in 1533; but

Daniel and François appear to have been good friends still.

Here, once again, the Maître could breathe freely for a respite, and relax. He was among friends, his own kind, from whom he had nothing to hide, and with whom he could be himself. He must have been reminded of the old days in André Tiraqueau's garden and at Ligugé. These breathing-spells in such a life as his must have been refreshing interludes; and the evidence from his own letters is that they were. Just as, at Ligugé, he had lain in bed and composed a verse epistle to Jean Bouchet, so now he sits down to dash off a merry little note to Hullot at Orléans. This is practically the only place in all of Rabelais' correspondence where we come upon anything like the real author of the *Gargantua and Pantagruel;* it is, certainly, the only letter in which something of the Rabelaisian play of humour is to be found; and as such it deserves to be quoted:

Hey, pater reverendissime, quomodo brulis? Quae nova? Parisius non sunt ova. *These words, uttered in the presence of Your Reverence, and translated from the Pathelin tongue into our Orléans vulgate, are equivalent to my saying: "Sir, we are very glad, indeed, to see you back from the wedding and the big doings at Paris." If the good God should inspire you to transport your paternity as far as this hermitage, you would be able to tell us some fine yarns, I am sure. Not only that, but the master of the place would present you with a certain species of carpified fish which are caught by the hair. But you will, I feel certain, do this, not when it pleases you, but when you are led hither by the will of that Great, Good, and Merciful God, who was never*

the creator of Lent, even though he did create the salads, herrings, haddock, carp, pike, dace, umbrines, ablets, rippes, *etc.* Add: *good wines, especially the* de verere jure enucleando, *which is being held for your coming like a Holy Grail and a second—nay, a fifth* (quinte) *essence.* Ergo veni, Domine, et noli tardare,—*I mean,* salvis salvandis, id est, hoc est, *without, of course, putting yourself to any inconvenience or taking your attention away from any more urgent business in hand.*

Sir, after having commended myself with all my heart to your good graces, I shall pray Our Lord to preserve you in perfect health. From Saint-Ay, this first day of March,

Your humble chief-cook-and-bottle-washer, and your friend, Franc. Rabelais, *physician.*

M. the Collector-Elect Pailleron will find herewith enclosed my very best regards, and the same to Mme, the Collector-Elect, to M. the Bailiff Daniel, and to all your other good friends and to you. I shall ask M. le Scelleur *to send me the Plato which he once lent me, and I will send it back to him very soon.*

The opening of the letter is a delirious passage from the *Pathelin,* which might be rendered: "Hey, there, most reverend father, what's burning you up? What's the good word? There are no eggs at Paris" (the Latin, needless to state, being macaronic). The "*de vetere jure enucleando*" is "a point of old law to clear up," etc. The humour is a bit heavy, a bit clerico-legal and esoteric; it is hardly the creator of Gargantua, after all; and yet, it is the lightest touch that François achieved as a letter-writer, and it shows us the humour he was in at the time.

On the 12th. of May, Langey left again for Turin, to resume his duties there, and Rabelais accompanied him. On the way, François stopped off at Lyons to leave the manuscript of the *Stratagemes* (Massuau's translation) with Gryphe. (It may be that it was at this time the revising of the first two Books was done.) This proved to be the Lord of Langey's last journey to the Piedmont.

III

Friendship is a word the implications of which, in a turbulent age like the sixteenth century, are, often, not so easy to disentangle. It is frequently hard, for one thing, to say, as in the case of Rabelais' relations with Jean du Bellay, where patronage leaves off and friendship begins. The same is true of François and Guillaume du Bellay. There may be such a thing as a mixed affection; but the Maître's feeling toward both the brothers Du Bellay was, we may be sure, a warm one. With Langey in particular, his friendship was, perhaps, as deep a one as any that he knew in the course of his life. The chapter in Rabelais' Fourth Book descriptive of his patron's death strikes a note of profound sincerity, reminding one—(for even a world-villain can be sincere)—of Pietro Aretino's letter on the death of Giovanni delle Bande Nere (the one dated from Mantua, December 10, 1526). François puts his memorial into Epistemon's mouth:

"I remember it very well," said Epistemon, "and I still shudder, and my heart palpitates in its sheath, when I think of those prodigies, so varied and so horror-inspiring, which

we plainly beheld five or six days before his departure. As a result, the Lords Assier, Chémant, Mailly the One-Eyed, Saint-Ay and Villeneuve-la-Guiart, as well as Master Gabriel, physician of Savillan, Rabelais, Cohuau, Massuau, Maiorici, Bullou, Cercu known as the Burgomaster, François Proust, Ferron, Charles Girard, François Bourré and a great many other friends, household retainers and servants of the dying man were terrified, all of them, and stood gazing at one another in silence, without opening their mouths to say a word, being lost in thought; for they in their minds foresaw that France was soon to be deprived of a perfect knight, and one so essential to her own glory and protection, and they knew that the skies were seeking that same soul, as one due them by natural right."

François had a deep admiration for Langey's administrative policy, a policy of conciliation rather than of arms, one with an eye to the prosperity and the true welfare of the subject province. And Langey's death was a loss to France, and one which Frenchmen at that uncertain time had cause to mourn.

Langey had fallen ill in the fall and, feeling himself growing worse, had dictated his last will and testament, in which François came in for a legacy of fifty pounds annually, which was to be his until he should have obtained a living worth three hundred pounds—that living, it is clear, is still on the Maître's mind. This meant nothing, as it turned out, inasmuch as Langey had little but debts to leave. In December, the Langey suite set out for France, effecting a crossing of the Alps in mid-winter. Physicians advised him to make a halt, but Langey refused; and on

January 9, 1543, his death occurred. Rabelais and Saint-Ay transported the remains of the "*docte et preux chevalier*" across France. Being uncertain as to the place where the body was to be interred, they made a stop at the château of Saint-Ay from the 30th. of January to the 4th. of February. During this interval, Rabelais wrote two letters which are now lost, one to Joachim du Bellay and one to Martin du Bellay, who had remained at Turin; this latter communication conveyed the news that a German servant had robbed the baggage and stolen all the deceased's papers. It was finally decided that the body should be taken to Mans, where the funeral was held on March 5th. Clément Marot composed the chevalier's epitaph, and a mausoleum was erected in the Mans cathedral.

Many memories of the Knight of Langey and these Piedmont days are to be met with in Rabelais' work. The impress of a personality would seem to have been the thing he brought back with him from his third Italian sojourn.

On the 30th. of May, 1543, François lost another friend, one who had been his protector in the days when he was a vagrant monk, a friend of twenty years' standing, Geoffroy d'Estissac. Death was taking its toll; but the Maître was soon to discover that life, too, had a way all its own of severing friendships.

IV

Rabelais, following his Aigues-Mortes conversion, if we may employ the word a bit loosely and jocosely, had made up his mind to watch his step in a literary way thereafter. In the recent revision of the text of his *Gargantua and Pan-*

tagruel for the new François Juste edition, he had been at considerable pains to make sure that all words and passages which might conceivably give offence should be elided. One may picture, then, his astonished indignation when he learned that his old friend, Étienne Dolet, had taken it upon himself to publish an edition of the original unexpurgated version. This was an embarrassing and an annoying situation for any author, and one that might have its consequences.

Dolet was making use with a vengeance of that ten-year editorial carte blanche which Francis had accorded him. He had grown, with the years, outwardly more overbearing and high-handed. Marot and most of the other Humanists had broken with him, and were either his open or, as in the case of the poet mentioned, his covert foes—Marot had taken Dolet's name out of his poems, and Visagier and Bourbon had forsworn his friendship. It is a significant fact that when the moment came for the printer-poet-Humanist to go to the stake, there was, with the exception of Théodore de Bèze, not a single one of his former comrades in the cause of letters to mourn his fate. Well might Étienne pray to be delivered from the slanders of human kind! As they dragged him to the Place Maubert, tradition puts a punning pentameter into his mouth: "*Non dolet ipse Dolet, sed pia turba dolet.*" But the Humanistic *pia turba* certainly did not grieve.

François deeply resented what he looked upon as a treachery on his friend's part toward his printer and himself. And when, that same year, Pierre de Tours, Juste's successor in the publishing business, brought out a new edition of the two Books, that edition was found to contain

a word from "The Printer to the Reader." This *avis* is one of the most vitriolic attacks ever penned. It is a long list of hard names hurled at Dolet's defenseless head, of which the excerpt given at the head of this chapter is a mild sample. It assuredly does not sound like Rabelais; and yet, the latter's unmistakable touch is on the thing, to such an extent that M. Jacques Boulenger, the Rabelaisian textual expert, believes the passage must be included in any complete and critical edition of the Maître. What likely happened was, François gave the printer the idea, and the latter did the writing. He must, at all events, have approved the insertion of the *avis*.

François' precautions proved of small avail, for the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel* were once more censured by Parliament, upon complaint of the theological faculty (March 2, 1543); and it was in this same year that the King's Arabic reader, Guillaume Postel, openly accused the author of impiety and heresy, in his *Alcorani seu Legis Mahometi, etc.*

V

If Rabelais had lost any ground at court, and we do not know that he had, as yet, he was also making gains. About July, 1553, he was appointed royal *maître des requêtes*, a largely honorary post which was often conferred upon poets and men of letters, which carried with it no arduous duties, but which gave the incumbent of the "office" the right of belonging to the royal entourage. Salmon Macrin, Saint-Gelais, Heroët, Danès and Salel were among others who had received the honour. This nominal preferment came

to François, in all likelihood, through the Cardinal du Bellay and through François Errault, Sieur de Chémant, a friend both of Rabelais' and of the Cardinal's, who had just been elevated to the office of chancellor (Errault had been president of the Parliament of Turin during Langey's administration).

And then, for another two-year period, from July, 1543, to September, 1545, we lose all trace of our subject. As a *maître des requêtes*, he may have been at court; or he may have been at Saint-Maur with the Cardinal du Bellay, whose new château Philibert de l'Orme had just finished building. M. Plattard thinks he may have been making a stay in Poitou, this conjecture being based upon a number of Poitevin allusions in the Third Book, which was shortly to follow.

Yet another hypothesis is that it was at this time that he paid the visit, which he would seem to have made at one time or another, to those Hyerean Isles (Iles d'Hyères) of which, in the first edition of Book Third, he advertises himself as the "Sacristan" (*Calloier*). In Chapter L. of the same Book, Rabelais speaks of "my Hyerean Islands, formerly the Stoechades," which Le Duchat explains as follows: "The Hyerean Isles, on the coast of Provence, are so called on account of the proximity of the city of Hyères. And since the Greek name of this city is *Olbia*, the meaning is that, as a good Thelemite, he had found the means of making himself happy." These islands were noted for their medicinal plants, and a visit to them was regarded as a graceful mode of topping off one's academic studies.

When François once more emerges from the shadows, on September 19, 1545, it is on the occasion of the granting,

by Francis I., of a royal Privilege for the printing of "the subsequent books and portions of the *Heroic Deeds of Pantagruel*, beginning with the third volume, along with power and authority to correct and revise the two first parts heretofore by him composed." The document opens with a reference to "our dear and loyal friend, Maître François Rabelais, doctor of medicine in our University of Montpellier." With regard to the first two books, it is set forth that "the printers have corrupted and perverted the said books, in a number of passages, to the great displeasure and detriment of the said author and the prejudice of readers." It is stated that "the learned and studious of our realm" have "daily besought and importuned . . . for purposes of public utility, the said sequel to be printed." There is a disagreement in the text of the Privilege as to the length of time, ten years or six, for which it is good. Any publisher other than the author's own is forbidden to print or place these works on sale.

Rabelais now becomes a royally accredited author, and his new title-page reads: "Composed by M. Franç. Rabelais, Doctor of Medicine"; the old and obscure "Alcofribas Nasier" is dead.

To what, or to whom, did he owe this latest sign of kingly favour? To his position as *maître des requêtes?* Or to the good offices of his friend Marguerite, the Queen of Navarre and Francis' sister? For it is to the latter that Book Third is dedicated.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

RABELAIS AND THE SOMEWHAT TOO ETERNAL

The controversy is an old one, as ancient as the world, since it began with the dawn of humanity, at the moment when our first mother extended the apple to our first father; and it is one which will, undoubtedly, last until the end of time.

ABEL LEFRANC

IF François Rabelais was a man's man, he is likewise a man's, in no sense a woman's writer. Any masculine doubter has but to try the experiment of reading Dr. Rondibilis, or for that matter, almost any passage of the *Gargantua and Pantagruel* to a feminine audience of one or more. That audience, it is to be feared, will not be in the least likely to understand that what the Doctor is really doing is depicting, under the form of "medical satire," the results and symptoms of uterine hysteria. What she, or they, will see will be a series of broad, coarse and "vulgar" thrusts at the weaker sex. They probably will be careful not to employ the word "ungallant," as being too revelatory; their word will be "vulgar"; but what they will mean is ungallant, and ungallant means a lack of sensitivity and susceptibility to the age-old feminine attack. No, the Maître is not for women,

And they have good reason. Never, perhaps, was there a writer, not an out-and-out devotee of Antiphysis, who in one book so hilariously lambasted the sex, burying it under a mountain of ridicule, and who throughout the rest of his work exhibited so careless and disdainful an obliviousness of its existence.

The reason behind this Book is, we now know, more than a purely personal one. We are aware that Book Third is, in a manner of speaking, but a document in the *Querelle des Femmes*, and that Maître François was simply lining up with his old friend, Tiraqueau, against such masculine idealizers of woman as Antoine Heroët and against such feminine spokesmen as Marguerite. We have seen that this controversy goes back, beyond the *Fifteen Joys* and the *Arrests d'Amour*, to the *Carmina Burana* and the diocesans of old Bishop Golias; and Prof. Lefranc has just assured us that it goes back further yet,—much further. Undoubtedly, it does.

With Book Third, Rabelais came to be looked upon as "one of the most notorious, dangerous and typical enemies of the feminine sex." As a consequence, the word "Pantagruelist" came to be practically synonymous with "woman-hater." An extraneous view of the author's position is afforded us in a work which, coming in 1555, is in reality a résumé of the *Querelle* as a whole. This is François Billon's *Le Fort Inexpugnable de l'Honneur du Sexe Feminin.* The mere space given to Rabelais in this feminist brief, not to speak of the fervour expended upon the creator of Panurge and Pantagruel, is sufficient to tell the tale.

But there were indications of his attitude long before Book Third saw the light: the slighting reference to Gar-

gamelle's death; Gargantua's ludicrous mourning for Badebec; etc. At Thélème, it is true, all was to be done "according to the will of the ladies," and in the eighth chapter of the *Pantagruel*, there is a word of praise for those members of the sex who had aspired to the "heavenly manna of learning"; but these, Professor Lefranc thinks, were "momentary effusions," and the Gallic scholar goes on to observe that woman is either entirely absent from the remainder of Books First and Second, or is there treated with little consideration. If woman is glorified at Thélème, it is for the reason that such a glorification was a necessary element in the picture of an anti-monastic society.

With respect to woman, there have been two traditions in France, which have existed side by side from very early times: the old satiric *gauloise* tradition and the chivalric, idealistic attitude. During the decade from 1530 to 1540, an effort was made to give the ideal of *courtoisie* a new meaning and a new life. The movement appeared to be growing in strength, and it is not strange if cries of alarm were soon raised against it. Among those to sound the alarm had been Gratian (Gratien) Dupont, Seigneur de Drusac. His *Controverses de Sexe Masculin et Feminin*, a vast "poem" in three books, containing nothing more than a series of violent invectives against women, had been published at Toulouse in 1534. (It may be noted, parenthetically, that the author is reported to have been unhappily married.) This was one of a number of works on the subject which provided Maître François with source-material. The latter's story of the nuns in the thirty-fourth chapter is one of his borrowings from Dupont.

Another work which must be mentioned in connexion with

the *Querelle* is a curious one bearing the captivating title: *Les Angoysses Douloureuses Qui Procedent d'Amours . . . par Dame Helisenne, Laquelle Exhorte Toutes Personnes à ne Suyvre Folle Amour.* This Dame Helisenne was a young lady who had translated into French the first four books of the Æneid, dedicating her translation to Francis I. The *Angoysses Douloureuses,* the story of her own life and loves, had been published at Paris in 1538. She was also the author of a collection of letters and other works, all of which, according to the Abbé de Marsy and other commentators, read very much like the Limousin Student's speeches (she has been seen, by Le Motteux and others, as the original of that character). On the other hand, Professor Lefranc, after quoting Michelet's "The true Renaissance is the Renaissance of the heart," goes on to characterize the product of Dame Helisenne's pen as a book containing "the first cries of the heart and the language of true passion."

Now, any anti-feminist who made a thorough job of his convictions must have been irritated by such a manifestation as this. One can imagine what effect a Dame Helisenne would have upon a François Rabelais; and it was partly by way of reaction to such works, coming from women or their masculine defenders, that the latter came to put down on paper his own view of the case. In doing so, he borrowed freely, as was his custom, from both sides.

It was some time in January, probably, 1546, that the Third Book was put on sale by Chrétien Wechel. François was then fifty years old. Starting rather late as a result of his monastic years, his first important literary work having been published at the age of thirty-six, he was now at the flush of his powers. He had lived much and learned much

in those fourteen years which had elapsed since Pantagruel, King of the Dipsodes, had been Restored to the Life; and it was in every way a mature François who sat down to write of Panurge's imminent cuckoldom. How, then, was he or any writer who was alive, who had something to say to his age, to keep out of, or even to adopt a neutral position in, the *Querelle des Femmes?* And Rabelais did have something to say. In the discussions of Book Third, it may seem at times that he is doing his best to preserve a neutral attitude, since he makes a show of presenting both sides of the question; but upon anything like close inspection, his position is seen to be far from neutral.

"No writer," says Lefranc, "between 1540 and 1555 stood aloof from the *Querelle des Femmes.* How, then, suppose for a single moment that the greatest of them all, the most representative, the one most desirous of linking his work up with all the social, political, religious, scientific and even colonial preoccupation of his age, could have remained outside the struggle? The hypothesis could not possibly be sustained; a priori, everything contradicts it.

"Rabelais no longer has any attention except for the redoubtable enigmas centring about the feminine sex and marriage; he thinks only of making his voice heard in the general concert. This man, over whom the mysteries of human destiny and human liberty always exerted so profound and so disturbing an attraction, now concentrates all his reflective powers upon a partial aspect of this great secret."

Rabelais' quickened interest in the Woman Question seems to have led to certain radical changes in the outline of his romance as originally conceived, if the work may be re-

garded as having had anything in the way of a preconceived plan. It is not until Chapter VII. or IX. that the author of the Third Book really gets into his subject, and into the swing of the Book as a whole. It is possible, accordingly, that the first chapters were written before Rabelais had decided to take up the new theme. Such a change in plan would account for the seeming abandonment of the outline for the ensuing books which is given at the conclusion of Book Second; but that outline had already been abandoned, when the author went back to pick up the Gargantua legend and weave into it the Gaucher de Sainte-Marthe episode. His thoughts probably ran somewhat as follows: "Well, now, having disposed of *him*, I will go back and go on with the story of Pantagruel and those voyagings of his which I promised my readers"; and it was with this intention that he wrote the first seven or nine chapters, taking his general plot, as it would seem, from the *Songe de Pantagruel* of François Hobert, one of his own imitators; but the noise of the *Querelle* round about him proved entirely too distracting; and so, he proceeded to postpone those "Navigations" from Book Third to Book Fourth, and, good journalist that he always was, plunged at once into the controversy of the hour.

It is a good thing for us that he did so; else, we should have lost, if not the most fascinating, certainly the most erudite portion of his work. For Book Third is the one that contains the most learning, the most quotations and citations. It has been termed the book of the Humanist, the philologist, the botanist, the physicist. It is such work as comes from a man's most mature powers, those of a man

who is very much the scholar, but who, still, has "lived, done and doubted."

In this Book, the Platonist influence is especially evident; and it may be noted that Plato is here quoted more frequently than anywhere else in Rabelais. Other more or less palpable foreign and classic influences are those of Poggio, Erasmus, Ariosto, Aretino, Lucian, Pliny, Plutarch. For Ariosto, see the story of the nun, in Chapter XIX.; for Aretino, the story of the Gaston in Chapter XLII. Among the numerous Greek and Latin writers from whom Rabelais has borrowed in this Book may be mentioned: Herodotus; Philostratus; Appollonius; Theophrastus; Suetonius; Macrobius; Lampridius; Spartianus; Trebellius; Pollio; Capitolinus; Isidorus; Diogenes Laertius; Diodorus Siculus; and others. Truly, an "encyclopædic mind." As for French "influences" not previously mentioned, one may make out Marot, Cretin, Jean Raulin, the preacher (see Chapters IX. and XXVII.), Enguerrand, etc. Most commentators have seen Cretin in the person of Raminagrobis; but according to Professor Lefranc, the "old English poet" is Rabelais' master, Jean Le Maire de Belges. One may also catch, in this Book, such far-away echoes as that of the Spanish Guevara.

On the other hand, a number of French writers, including Molière and La Fontaine, have drawn rather heavily upon this portion of their Maître, while the English Sterne makes at least one small borrowing, from Chapter XVI.: "a sot, a pot, a fool, a winter-mittain."

There is in the Book much technical and occult lore of all sorts, the author displaying an intimate familiarity

with theology, philosophy, law, medicine and the natural sciences, while his occult delvings range from Avicenna and Hermes Trismegistus to Nostradamus and Cornelius Agrippa.

But it would be a mistake to deduce from all this, though the deduction might be a perfectly natural one, that Book Third is preponderantly learned and heavy. It is anything but that; it is, as a matter of fact, one of the lightest and airiest in Rabelais. For the Maître possessed an exceptional gift, indeed, that of transmitting his erudition into fantasy; in this, he is only to be compared with James Joyce.

In addition, he tempers his learning with timeliness, always. In this Book, for instance, he takes occasion to express himself on a number of vital issues of the day, such as the question of parental consent to marriages, which provides Gargantua with a theme for a lengthy harangue. The law exempting newlyweds from war starts him off in Chapter XV., etc. His eulogy of the Pantagruelion in the closing botanical chapters, in reality a variation on a theme from Pliny, even has been seen as a satire on the newly introduced use of the hempen rope as a punishment for criminals. And, entering learned circles, Maître François seizes the opportunity, in passing, to express a lively opinion on so comparatively abtruse a question as the origin of language. He is, to sum it all up, the Humanist, the man of the Revival of Learning and the Renaissance, plus a first-rate journalist and a popular writer.

But he is more than a journalist; he has now become a conscious propagandist for the throne, and for those measures which the throne desires to see effectuated. His very choice of subject has some significance here, the question

of woman, love and marriage being one with which court and courtiers were particularly concerned. The opposition to clandestine marriages is a reflection of the royal will. French political policy (that of Langey) is approved in the Prologue, and court names, court fools, etc., are constantly bobbing up in the pages that follow. François is earning his kingly Privilege.

As for Marguerite, what did the author of the *Distinction du Vrai Amour, the Mort et Resurrection d'Amour*, etc., think of François' dedication to "The Spirit of the Queen of Navarre"?

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE EXILE OF METZ

Tempora etiam Rabelesum ejecerunt e Gallica. . . . Nondum ad nos venit. Metis constitit, ut audio, inde enim nos salutavit. Adero ipsi quibuscumque rebus potero cum ad nos venerit.

LETTER OF JEAN STURM TO CARDINAL DU BELLAY

IN his Third Book, François, it would seem, had played safe: a royal Privilege; a dedication to royalty; propaganda throughout for the royal policies; a catering to the conversational and literary interests of courtiers. Gone all attacks on the Sorbonne. Instead, this from the mouth of Pantagruel (Chapter XXIX.):

". . . *seeing that the chief, nay, the one and sole occupation of the good theologians is the business of extirpating errors and heresies, by deeds, by words and by writing* (*provided they themselves are not tainted*) *and of implanting deeply in human hearts the true and living Catholic faith.*"

The "good theologians," the "true and living Catholic faith"! The monks, true enough, are not let off; but when were they, ever, in that age? The Maître cannot resist Friar John and his Cloistral Frying-pan, his "apothegms" and his "matter of breviary." But this would have given offence

to none, and none would have laughed harder than the monks themselves. Rabelais, in the paradoxes of Panurge, goes back to his own monastic days and jovially displays his ability as a juggler of Scholastic logic; but it is all done in the best of good humour, and with no venom whatsoever. By abandoning almost entirely the old giganticesque motive, and by causing Pantagrue to yield the centre-stage to Panurge, the author does strike a little closer home; he comes a little nearer to life, so close that it is possible, with a degree of certainty, to indentify a number of his characters: Herr Trippa as Cornelius Agrippa; Rondibilis as Rondelet or Rabelais himself; Raminogrobis as Le Maire de Belges; Hippothadeus as Lefèvre d'Étaples; etc.; but with all his growing realism, the author knows very well just what he is doing in each case.

François must, therefore, have been at once surprised and dismayed, when he heard that Book Third had met with the same fate as the two preceding Books, having fallen under the ban of the Theological Faculty. Some time prior to April 25, 1546, it had been placed on the official list of condemned works. Why? All that we know is what Rabelais himself sets forth in the Epistle to the Cardinal de Châtillon which serves as a dedication to the Fourth Book. In his statement of the case which we find there, we are conscious of a note of fatigue: he is tired of it all, tired of the eternal hounding by "cannibals, misanthropes and agelasts" who have "vanquished my patience," and he is "more than of a mind not to write another iota"; he denies that his books are "crammed with heresies of various sorts," and insists that misinterpretations have been "read into" them. Châtillon had gone to the King in François' behalf, and His Majesty

had had the works in question read to him "by the most learned and capable readers of his realm, listening to the said reading most attentively." The King, it is reported, had not found "a single suspect passage."

The trouble, we surmise from this dedicatory epistle, may have arisen over one of Maître François' irrepressible bits of verbal horseplay. In three passages of the Third Book (Chapters XXII. and XXIII.) where the word should be "soul" (*âme*) the text has "ass" (*asne*). This in a less irascible era would have been no grave offence; the pun will be found in the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*; but the subject of the soul and its immortality happened to be a dangerous topic at this particular time: the expression of a Platonic doubt on the question was one of the things which sent Étienne Dolet to the stake. And the action, also, of Raminagrobis in turning all the mendicant monks out of the house immediately before his death may have annoyed the Sorbonnists. As for the *âme-asne* pun, Rabelais fell back upon his printers, blaming them for this "*coquille*."———"The fact must be recognized," says M. Marty-Laveaux, "that Rabelais was the true culprit."———"We would not believe him on his word," says M. des Marets.

Whatever the reason, the Third Book was suppressed; and its suppression marked the turning of the tide for Maître François. From now on, he is under a cloud. Things are beginning to go against him, and old friends to desert. In the month of February, Tiraqueau published a third edition of his *De Legibus*, from which he had elided the eulogistic passage referring to Rabelais, Pierre Amy's Latin quatrain and François' own Greek epigram. The times were, indeed, unfavourable.

As usual, when trouble threatened, Rabelais' impulse was to flee. "Would it have been better," inquires M. des Marets, "to let himself be burned?" This time, he crossed the frontier and made his way to Metz. At Metz, he got into touch by letter with Jean Sturm, rector of the University of Strassburg, and agent of the Du Bellays; and Sturm writes to the Cardinal: "The times have driven Rabelais out of France. . . . We have seen nothing of him as yet. He is at Metz, I hear, for he wrote me from there. I shall give him any assistance in my power as soon as he comes here."

He was, apparently, expected at Strassburg; but for some reason, he did not go there. He chose to remain in the provincial town of Metz, possibly for the reason that his tried friend, Étienne Lorens, Seigneur de Saint-Ay, possessed a house there, where he stopped on his frequent diplomatic missions to the German princes. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the natives pointed out a house in the Jewish quarter supposed to be the one in which Maître François had resided. The next we hear of him, he has entered the employ of the city of Metz, as a physician or in some other capacity, at a salary of 120 pounds a year, or three times as much as he had received at the Hôtel-Dieu in Lyons. In spite of this, he appears to be in straitened circumstances financially, and we find him throwing himself on the bounty of the one friend and patron who never yet had failed him, Jean du Bellay; in his letter to the Cardinal, he says:

My Lord,

When, upon leaving here some while back, M. de Saint-Ay was kind enough to convey to you my greetings I was not

then in the anxious straits in which I find myself at present, and which I must explain to you more fully. He told me, at that time, that you were of a mind to do something for me, provided some dependable man could be found coming from down that way. I assure you, My Lord, that if you do not take pity on me, I do not know what I am to do, unless, in sheer despair, I were to take service with someone down there, which obviously would be a great setback for me, so far as my studies are concerned.

It is not possible to live more frugally than I am doing; and so, might not you be able to share with me something of those many blessings which God has placed in your hands, in order that I may not have to live from hand to mouth like this, but may be able to keep myself decently, as I always have done up to the present time, for the honour of that household which I left behind me upon my departure from France?

My Lord, I commend myself very humbly to your good graces, and pray Our Lord to grant you, in perfect health, a very long and useful life.

From Metz, this sixth of February.

Your very humble servant,
FRANÇOIS RABELAIS, *physician.*

From this letter, we see that François was contemplating the alternative of entering the service of some German prince. The communication is couched in sufficiently humble terms, such as should be employed in addressing a prince of the Church; but M. Clouzot sees in it, by reading between the lines, something in the nature of a dun.

Jean du Bellay, in August of the year before, had been

appointed Bishop of Mans. As a result, François' letter went temporarily astray. Entrusted to Saint-Ay, it was placed in the hands of Martin du Bellay at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the Cardinal having already set out for his new charge, and the prelate's brother being supposed to forward the communication with other dispatches to Mans. Saint-Ay accompanied François' appeal with a note in which he devoted only a word or two to his friend's plight; he was forced to set out again without taking personal leave of the Cardinal, and it looked as though the Maître would have to wait some time for any aid from this quarter.

And then, an event occurred which altered the aspect of things generally. This was the death of Francis I. and the succession of Henry II. Francis died on March 31, 1547, and Henry no sooner came to the throne than he decided to send all the French cardinals to reside in Rome. Jean du Bellay's star was riding high, and Rabelais' old patron now found himself in full authority over all the French members of the Sacred College. Not only this, he was charged with the general direction of state affairs in Italy. But his health at this time was very bad—his sciatica again, and kidney trouble besides, with a fever that took his strength away: he needed his physician worse than ever!

It would appear, accordingly that François, about June of this year, must have received funds and a passport from Du Bellay. On June 24, just before leaving Metz, he drew his quarterly wages for the months of April, May and June. (On the 10th. of April preceding, he had drawn his pay for 1546–47, as we see from M. Paul Fleury's abstract of the municipal records.) As he shook the dust of yet another city from his feet, the Maître could say that he had at least

learned something there; he had picked up the phrase *Deu Colas, faillon*, which he himself, in the *Briefve Declaration*, that charming little glossary which he compiled to go with his Fourth Book, defines for us as "By the old St. Nick, my lad" (*De part Saint Nicolas, compaignon*). This, however, was not all that he had got there; there are other allusions to the city and its customs in his work.

While at Metz, François had occupied himself with composing his Fourth Book; and now, on the way to Rome, he stopped off at Lyons to leave what he had thus far completed of the manuscript with the bookseller, Pierre de Tours, François Juste's successor, who brought the work out under date of 1548, along with Rabelais' Almanac for the same year. This is what is commonly known as the "Partial Edition" of Book Fourth. It contains only eleven chapters and a Prologue (the "Old Prologue"), being about a third the length of the Book as it now stands. This edition breaks off hastily, in the middle of a phrase, showing that François must have been pressed for time. He probably was pressed for money, as well; and another reason for rushing publication before setting out for Italy may have been the desire to clear his name of the slanders which had been heaped upon it.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

INSPIRATION AND THE ESKIMOS

The south wind continued to favour us, along with a little of the sou'wester's help, and we passed a whole day without sighting any land. On the third day, at the houseflies' dawn, a triangular island hove in sight, very much like Sicily, both in shape and location. They call it the Island of Alliances. The men and women resemble red Poitevins, except for the fact that all of them, men, women and little children, have a nose that looks very much like the Ace of Clubs. For this reason, the island from time immemorial has been named Ennasin.

Book Fourth, Chapter IX.

I

WE do not know whether or not François Rabelais and Jacques Cartier, the discoverer of Canada, ever met in person. It has been thought that they did, and the thing is not impossible. It even has been conjectured that it was from Cartier that the Maître picked up his sea-terms.

Whatever may be the truth as to all this, it is certain that Rabelais' Fourth Book reflects in superb fashion the exotic impulse which had been introduced into French literature by the discovery of America and the search for the Northwest Passage. In this Book, the author shows that his geography is strictly up to date. His "red Poitevins"

sound very much like American Indians, while his "Ace of Clubs noses" point to the Greenlanders or Eskimos. The Island of Alliances, where these weird "Joiners" live, M. Plattard would identify as Greenland or the neighbourhood of Greenland. Moreover, the whole plot of Book Fourth is taken up with what is really the fantastic account of a voyage of exploration, the quest of the *Dive Bouteille* or Holy Bottle. This voyage is marked by all the traditional incidents; for this type of Odyssey is as old as Homer, and is a characteristic feature of the old romances of adventure. That the Northwest Passage is the thing in mind is clearly enough indicated in the opening chapter:

For his opinion, and that of Xenomanes likewise, was to the effect that, seeing the Oracle of the Holy Bottle was in Cathay, in upper India, the best thing to do was not to follow the route ordinarily taken by the Portuguese. The latter were in the habit of passing through the torrid zone and rounding the Cape of Good Hope, at the southern end of Africa, beyond the Equinoctial, thus losing from sight the North Pole, which should have served them as a guide; and in this manner, they made an enormous trip of it. But the better thing to do was to keep as close as possible to the parallel of India, and to swing around the North Pole to the west, in such a fashion that, coming in from the north, they would find themselves in the same latitude as the port of Olonne, but without going any further north than that, from fear of being drawn into the Arctic sea and marooned there.

Rabelais is still the unremitting realist, still going straight to life for his copy. A dry summer inspired the

Pantagruel, a country quarrel the *Gargantua*, the Woman Question gave him his Third Book; and now,—the Eskimos!

As in the case of the preceding Book, there is a very good reason behind François' choice of subject. In Book Third, he had elected the theme of woman and love, for the reason, partly, that it was the talk of the court; and in the course of that Book, he had advocated those ideas in which Francis I. was interested. Henry was to prove quite as good a friend as Francis had been, and two years later, was to renew the royal Privilege for Book Third. The new sovereign was to take a fancy, if he had not already done so, to this composer of popular and rowdy tales in the old *gauloise* manner. He believed Rabelais to be an utter atheist, it is said, but he seems to have liked him none the less for it, As for Maître François, he is fully aware of where his own best interests lie, and is still to be found doing all he can to forward the policies of the throne. Now, one of these policies had to do with maritime and colonial expansion; and this provided François with one good reason the more for selecting a subject that was in itself vivid and topical enough.

Another royal policy had to do with the relations of the Gallican church to the See of Rome. At the very moment when Rabelais' book was being brought out, Henry's edict against the abuses of Rome was being promulgated, to the sound of trumpet, in the streets of Paris. This tends to throw a new light on the "Papimaniac" and "Decretalist" episodes of the book. Rabelais, then after all, is not the violent, raging Church-smasher which he in the past has been made out to be; he, once more, is merely—playing

safe by playing up to the throne. Assuming that he was, with it all, sincere,—and we are scarcely justified in making any other assumption; sincerity in such a case, with all the ramifications involved, is rather a difficult matter to determine,—his position was very much that of the contemporary *Action française* and M. Léon Daudet. He was, in other words, a nationalistic Catholic. François had had in the past associations which well might have tended to strengthen such a view: the Fountaine-le-Comte group, Bouchet, Ardillon, Le Maire de Belges; men of the middle path between Rome and Protestantism; men, some of them, whose personal and family sympathies went back as far as Louis XII. and that monarch's struggle with the Holy See. In any case, Maître François was against the government of Rome.

If this were the only subject of the sort on which the author took occasion to express himself in the course of the book, one might not be inclined to emphasize quite so strongly the royalist influence; but there are a number of allusions—to the state of affairs in England, Scotland, etc.—which show that he is endeavouring to keep on the good side of the court. M. des Marets believes that the composition of Book Fourth may have been undertaken with the object of sounding out the attitude of the new monarch.

"Francis I. was no longer there to defend him against the *censure sorbonique*. But it was necessary to postpone the undertaking; and it was not until 1552 that the book in its entirety was published by Michel Fezandat. The first Prologue no longer possessing the merit of timeliness, Rabelais composed a new one for the book."

II

Book Fourth is a good deal less literary and erudite, a good deal closer to life than its predecessor. The wealth of classical allusion to be found in the preceding book is lacking. Among the outstanding and hilarious episodes may be mentioned Panurge and his sheep ("Panurge's sheep"), Panurge and the storm, and the "Shysteroos" (*les Chicquanous*). In the sheep incident, the Maître has borrowed once more from Folengo's Cingar, and has bettered his material. The storm scene shows an indebtedness to the same Italian author. Occasionally, Rabelais lifts from his own imitators, as when he takes his giant, Bringuenarilles, from another work of the period, the *Merveilleuses Navigations de Panurge*.

But in connexion with this particular book, Rabelais' "sources" are more likely to have been maps, or works on geography and cosmography. That he had pored over the maps of the day is quite evident from his pages. The Macraeon Islands, for example, may be identified with the Island of Demons near Labrador; the island of Margaster, near Greenland, has suggested Messer Gaster; the island of Papy near Iceland has given birth to the Island of Papimaniacs. This geographic indebtedness has been traced in detail by such scholars as Professor Arthur Tilley and Professor Lefranc.

As for the celebrated storm scene, it has been the occasion of heated controversy in Rabelaisian circles, the row being over Rabelais' use of nautical terms. It was started

by the nineteenth-century naval glossarist Jal, who accused the Maître of being all wrong. The details, being of a technical interest, need not be gone into here. It will be sufficient to state that the case has, on the whole, been decided in Rabelais' favour. Here, as in his other realistic detail, he was conscientiously accurate and knew whereof he spoke.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

THE SECRET DOCTRINE

A problem of great interest now confronts us, which we are going to attempt to solve. What was Rabelais' real object in first publishing his work? Was he interested merely in telling a tale, and in teaching his contemporaries "how to laugh"? Or on the other hand, did he have a hidden and more complex motive? Was it his intention to instruct and amuse, at one and the same time? If he had ideas to express, and even to defend, just what were those ideas? With precisely what doctrines, what essential thought-currents of the age, is it permissible to associate them? These are important problems . . . deserving of profound study. And it is possible that such investigation, more novel in character than one might imagine, will prove to be one fertile in surprises.

Œuvres de François Rabelais. Édition Critique

I

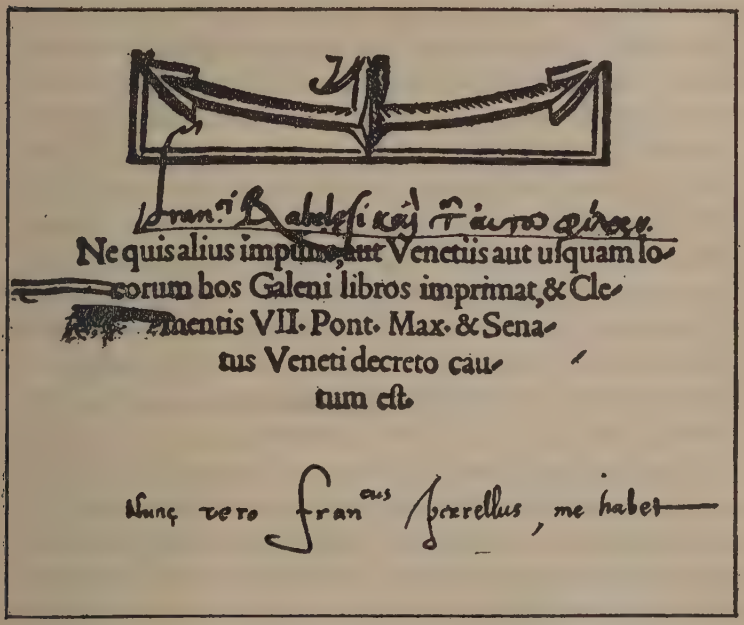
WITH Book Fourth, Rabelais' literary work that counts is brought to a close, or will be when the complete edition of the book is published. The evidence is now in, and the time has come to inquire what is the meaning of that evidence. Literary "sources" and "influences," those necessary evils, have been discussed. On the literary side, the Maître has been seen to be, basically and genetically, a realist, soaring from the soil of Reality and goaded on by its lash, run-

ning his realistic material into a worn traditional mould, dominating in the end both form and material, and pouring into his work the encyclopædic erudition of a Man of the Renaissance. So much for the writer; but what of the man? What light may the former be made to shed upon the latter? The inquiry, surely, is not only a legitimate, but an inescapable one. Remembering, always, the danger; remembering those words of Valéry's: "A man's true life . . . cannot be utilized in any explanation of his works, unless it be indirectly and by means of a most painstaking analysis." A man's works cannot be utilized in any explanation of his life—

What was Rabelais' "secret doctrine"—"*la pensée secrète*"? Let us begin by clearing a little ground.

First, as to method. There are two prominent pitfalls to be noted. One is the identification—any identification—of the author with his characters, the taking of words which may fall from Gargantua's, Pantagruel's or Panurge's mouth as the expression of Rabelais' own sentiments. For these, we are to remember, are types; Maître François may cause his giants, who are not especially noted for their intellective capacity, to say things which he himself does not believe. Another temptation, on the part of any pleader, is *to make out a case*, to see in a given passage only what he wants to see, and blithely to overlook anything in that very passage, or in other parts of the same work, which may contradict his desires. A case in point is Pantagruel's prayer, in the Second Book, just before joining battle with Loup Garou. M. Plattard sees this, as I am inclined to do myself, as a manifestation of early Protestantism, while Professor

Lefranc sees only the "*Hoc fac et vinces*" as a slighting and atheistic play on a Christian miracle. A third snare to be avoided is the building up of any hard-and-fast *system*, a pattern or mould which all things must be made to fit. In brief, the desirable thing, as always, is to start out without


Ne quis alius impune, aut Venetiis aut usquam lo-
corum hos Galeni libros imprimat, & Cle-
mentis VII. Pont. Max. & Sena-
tus Veneti decreto cau-
tum est.
Hunc vero Franus Rabelesius, me habet

"That Good Scout, Galen"
(*Autograph Inscription of Rabelais on a Copy of Galen. Sheffield Library*)

a bias of any sort, with a willingness to let the evidence speak for itself, even though that evidence be altogether inconclusive in the end. Must there be a conclusion? "*Ce qui me console un peu*," remarks M. Jacques Boulenger, "*c'est*

qu'il n'y a pas de conclusions solides." Perhaps, when all is said, Rabelais, in the words of another (Pierre) Boulenger, will remain always "an enigma for posterity."

Proceeding on this basis, there are certain hypotheses which, thanks to the biographic light already acquired, we may put to one side at once. One of these is the supposition that Rabelais was, in any essential sense, a Protestant. We know that he was extremely Protestant-sounding in his early work; but we also know exactly how that came about, as a result of the early confusion of aims which existed between the men of the New Learning and the advocates of a Reform in the Church; we have seen how this fundamental and irreconciliable difference in aims and in ideals gradually became apparent to both sides, to the Humanistic believers in an aristocratic principle of individual liberty and to Rabelais' "predestinators." As for Calvin, we have heard him calling Rabelais and Rabelais' kind "dogs and swine." As Professor Lefranc observes, Maître François never adhered, in any real sense, to Protestant dogma.

What was he, then? Calvinist and orthodox Catholics at once overwhelmed him with epithets and reproaches. This would appear to indicate that he must have been something other than either a Catholic or a Protestant. What was this "something other"?

Professor Lefranc will answer by telling us that Rabelais was an atheist under cover, as an atheist had to be with the bodies of atheist-suspects feeding the flames all around him. The French scholar sees Rabelais, the "pride and hope of the Renaissance," as the deliberate spokesman, under the veils of laughter and of irony, for the sodality of free-thinkers of his age. Rabelais had "ceased to be a Christian."—

"A new Rabelais, who no longer believes in gospel miracles nor even in Christianity, rises in front of us. There can no longer be any possible doubt: the author of this book (the *Pantagruel*) was an adherent at the beginning of his literary career, of the rationalist faith, of what we moderns call free thought." A "secret doctrine" and a "prodigious realism" are to be found existing side by side. This is the true "substantific marrow," the meaning of those "Pythagorean symbols." In his work, Rabelais shows an utter disrespect for the Scriptures, for miracles, for the ceremonies of the Catholic Church, for all those things held sacred by Christians; Panurge indulges in pranks which no true believer would countenance; the popes are nose-thumbed. The author of the *Pantagruel* does not believe in the immortality of the soul (indicated by Gargantua's letter in Chapter VIII.), but is a disciple of Lucian and Lucretius, one accused by his own contemporaries of "Lucianism" and "Epicureanism." Writers of his time such as Scèvole de Sainte-Marthe and Étienne Pasquier looked upon him as a "cynical atheist"; he is even charged in a letter of Antoine Fumée to John Calvin (1542 or 1543) with being a member of a sect of anti-Christians. He had associated with men of doubtful faith, like Briand Vallée; and Des Periers, the author of the *Cymbalum Mundi* and the creator of Pamphagus, treats him as a brother atheist. This was the secret of the wandering, unsettled life the Maître led, the persecutions to which he was subjected.

Such, summarily put, is Professor Lefranc's case. The objection is that the professor is quite obviously bent upon making out a case, upon building up a system out of the evidence. He would have Rabelais to have been a member of

a secret, underground cult, and his object in putting pen to paper to have been the veiled spreading of atheistic propaganda. Now, there are systems and systems; and one is almost as bad as another. Older commentators, of the Éloi Johanneau stamp, were bent upon erecting an "historical," allegoric system, and shied at no degree of stultity that was necessary in order to make their hypotheses stand. Prof. Lefranc's case is, needless to state, different. He is the greatest living Rabelais scholar, and one of the world's great scholars,—one who endears himself all the more, it may be, for the reason that he has a bias and is so extremely honest about it—after all, why should not scholarship have a bias; or rather, why should not scholars frankly admit their bias? But while a bias may be inevitable and even desirable (this writer has confessed to his), one still may cry: Beware of systems. The Old Boys have their system; they see in the Maître nothing more than a humourist, and humourlessly forbid all others to see anything more than that. Let us not go to the other extreme by making Rabelais too serious. An artistic seriousness, in the sense of an essential, even if not an over-conscious, artistic sincerity certainly was his; and he was spiritually sincere in pouring into his work, in despite of any time-serving propaganda, his outlook upon life, his deepest convictions as a Humanist and a Man of the Renaissance; but was atheism one of those convictions, and the diffusion of an atheistic gospel an impelling motive? It is hard to believe.

We have seen that his irreverences toward the Scriptures and the ceremonies of the Church, and what Professor Lefranc terms his "rationalistic criticism of miracles," as well, held in themselves nothing that was shocking to his age,

nothing that was calculated or likely to outrage his readers' sensibilities. As M. Gilson has observed, in his study of Rabelais the Franciscan, it is simply impossible for us today to get the point of view which prevailed in the sixteenth century.

As for testimony coming from Protestants, like Calvin and his associates, on the one hand, or from rigidly orthodox Catholic formalists of the Sorbonne type on the other, it would seem that such evidence was to be discounted at once. It is the man of the middle path who gets the blows. And for such other external evidence as that of Des Periers' Dialogues, it may be remarked that this evidence is very often, as in the case of the *Hylactor and Pamphagus*, open to a double interpretation. M. Delaruelle, for one, would disagree with Professor Lefranc as to the conclusions to be drawn from the piece just mentioned. Take that letter of Gargantua's in the *Pantagruel;* Lefranc points out that there is nothing there to indicate a belief in personal immortality, but rather the contrary:

It is not, therefore, without just and equitable cause that I give thanks to God, my Saviour, for having given me the power to see my hoary old age flowering again in your youth: for when, in accordance with the pleasure of the One who rules and moderates all things, my soul shall leave this human habitation, I shall not feel that I am wholly dying in thus passing from one place to another, so long as, in you and through you, my visible image remains in this world, living, seeing and moving among men of honour and my own good friends as I was wont to do. . . .

For this reason, since my bodily image remains in you,

if the manners of my soul should not likewise shine there, you would not be held to have been the guardian and the treasurer of that immortality which should go with our name; and the pleasure I should take in beholding you would, accordingly, be small, when I perceived that the lesser part of me, which is the body, remained, while the better part, which is the soul, which causes our name still to be blessed among men, had become degenerate and bastardized. . . . I have spared no expense on you, but have aided you as though I had no other treasure in this world than the joy, once in my life, of seeing you absolutely perfect in virtue, decency and wisdom, as well as in all generous and worthy accomplishments, with the assurance of leaving you, upon my death, as a mirror depicting the person of me, your father.

With regard to personal immortality, what, it might be asked, about that "passing from one place to another"? No, what we have in the foregoing passage is nothing more or less than the confusion resulting from that reconciliation which the Humanists were endeavouring to effect between pagan teachings and Christianity. Ever since its birth, Humanism has been haunted by the problem of what to do about religion. The sixteenth-century Humanists made a condescending gesture, a gesture which was in reality the patronizing attitude of the intellectually newly rich. Religion was a good little girl, if one knew how to treat her; and they, Erasmus, Budé and the others, did know just that. A reconciliation (*sic*) was later to be accomplished, but it was not one that either Budé or Erasmus would have

countenanced; for unfortunately, it was not the Church but Protestantism that was poured in with the New Learning to effect a gruesome and insoluble compound, the final result of which may be seen in that one-building university of the American prairie of which Mr. Mencken has something to say. Our Humanists of today reject the Protestant synthesis; and as a consequence, Humanism is left hanging in the air, a flapping ghost on the clothesline of intellectual freedom, a pauper, as Mr. T. S. Eliot would tell us (see his essay on Professor Babbitt), endeavouring to live on an unearned increment. Present-day Humanists, the truth is, are in too pathetic a position for attack; their own confessions betray them. They are, for the most part, right-hearted fellows doing their best to fight through; and in François Rabelais and in his age, they may see the genesis of their problem.

In the above passage, François, we suspect, has not quite succeeded as yet in adjusting his Plato (a recent influence in his thinking) and his Christ. He is, here, clearly playing upon the old idea which is to be met with in the thirtieth ode of Horace's third book: the *Non omnis moriar;* a song which many poets (creators) after him have sung, including William Shakespeare.

In any event, by way of showing the differing conclusions which different commentators draw from the same passage, M. des Marets notes: "A materialist or an atheist would never have been able to put into Gargantua's mouth such a letter as this."

Throughout Rabelais' work, the evidence is quite too cumulative to permit of any doubt that he was a theist. In

his early Protestant period, it is clear that he held a belief in the Trinity. Professor Saintsbury has summed the matter up as well as anyone could do:

"There are in the book, in the description of Gargantua's and Pantagruel's education, in the sketch of the abbey of Thelema, in several passages relating to Pantagruel, expressions which either signify a sincere and unfeigned piety of a simple kind or else are inventions of the most detestable hypocrisy. For these passages are not, like many to be found from the Renaissance to the end of the eighteenth century, obvious flags of truce to cover attacks. . . . There is absolutely no sign of the tongue in the cheek. They are always written in the author's highest style, a style perfectly eloquent and unaffected; they can only be interpreted (on the free-thinking hypothesis) as allegorical with the greatest difficulty and obscurity, and it is pretty certain that no one reading the book without a thesis to prove would dream of taking them in a non-literal sense.

"It is not, indeed, to be contended that Rabelais was a man with whom religion was in detail a constant thought, that he had a very tender conscience or a very scrupulous orthodoxy. His form of religious sentiment was not evangelical or mystical, any more than it was ascetic or ceremonial or dogmatic. As regards one of the accepted doctrines of his own church, the excellence of the celibate life, of poverty, and of elaborate obedience to a rule, he was no doubt a strong dissident; but the evidence that, as a Christian, he was unorthodox, that he was even a heretical or latitudinarian thinker in regard to those doctrines which the various Christian churches have in common, is not merely weak, it is practically non-existent. The counter-testimony is, in-

deed, not very strong, and still less detailed. But that is not the point. It is sufficient to say that there is absolutely nothing within the covers of Rabelais' works incompatible with an orthodoxy which would be recognized as sufficient by Christendom at large. . . . Beyond this no wise man will go, and short of it hardly any unprejudiced man will stop."

II

But is there nothing on the positive side? François, at the time he handed those hasty first chapters of his Fourth Book to the printer, had attained the age of fifty-two. It is hard to see how a man of his not to be doubted intelligence, even though he was insensitive to "mystery," to "poetry," to "beauty" and to the beauty of the ascetic life, could have lived for half a century without having worked out, or having striven to work out, in his own mind the meaning of things; and I do not believe that such was the case with Rabelais. Granted that he had arrived at some sort of tentative answer, we, knowing our author as we do by this time, scarcely should expect him to keep that answer wholly out of his work,—which is something quite different from viewing him as a propagandist.

In the first place, we know from external evidence that he chose to remain within the Church; as, indeed, why should he not, since what is the Church if not catholic? Like the other early Humanists, it was on the side of textual criticism that he had first been drawn to Protestantism; but he had found that the religion of John Calvin meant anything but freedom for the textual critic or the freedom-seeking soul. Was he, perhaps, a deist, taking a discreet shelter under the Church's broad mantle? This is much more plaus-

ible; but there is one passage in his last authentic book (Book Fourth, Chapter XXVIII.) which does not sound precisely deistic. Pantagruel has just been telling the story of the death of the god Pan and of the heralding of Pan's death to the world:

"*According to my own interpretation, he was that great Saviour of the faithful who, in Judea, was ignominiously slain through the envy and iniquity of the pontiffs, doctors, priests and monks of the Mosaic law. For I can see nothing in the least objectionable in such an interpretation.*

"*He, in the Greek tongue, might very properly be called* Pan, *in view of the fact that He is our* All. *All that we are in this life, all that we have, all that we hope for is in Him, of Him, and by Him. He is the good Pan, the great Shepherd, who, as the impassioned herdsman, Corydon, puts it, not only has a love and affection for His sheep, but also for their shepherds. And at His death, there were wailing, sighs, terror and lamentations throughout the whole mechanism of the universe,—heavens, earth, sea and hell itself.*

"*And this interpretation of mine is in accordance with the facts of chronology. For this all-good, all-great Pan, our sole Saviour, died in Jerusalem during the reign of Tiberius Cæsar at Rome.*"

Pantagruel, having finished his speech, was silent, being lost in deep contemplation. A short while later, we beheld tears as big as ostrich-eggs coursing down from his eyes. And I hope God takes me if I am lying in a single word I say.

Maître François, naturally, could not resist those ostrich-eggs tears (which are such as a giant would be expected to

shed); and he suddenly realizes that he has become, for a moment, a bit too serious; so he must end the chapter on a jovial note.

That Pan, however, is not without its significance; the synthesis again. If we turn back, now, to Book Third, Chapter XIII., we may find illumination in the following:

". . . *In the same fashion, our soul, when the body is asleep . . . seeks its recreation by revisiting its fatherland, which is heaven. There, it is intimately initiated into its divine origin, and into the contemplation of that intimate and intellectual sphere, the centre of which is to be found in every spot in the universe and the circumference nowhere, the circumference being, according to Hermes Trismegistus, God: that mystic centre, where nothing happens, nothing passes, nothing falls away, and all time is at the present.*

It has been pointed out that Rabelais, like Rossali later, is in error in attributing this geometric definition of divinity to the Hermes Trismegistus; but in the Hermes, we do find an Immortal Circle: "*He kyklos ho athanatos tou theou* (the deathless Circle of God)." That "where all time is at the present" is quite in accord with the modern, and ancient, metaphysical and fourth-dimensional conception. In Rossali, we find this gloss, a translation of which is extremely difficult: "*Sane sicut centrum est ultimus finis, terminus quietis corporum gravium: ita certe ultimus finis perfectissima quies animorum. Hac de causa Mercurius vocat Deum Spheram intellectualem, cujus centrum ubique est, circumferentia vero nusquam.*"

And now, let us have a look at Pascal's famous *pensée:*

"It is an infinite sphere, the centre of which is everywhere, the circumference nowhere." Rabelais' definition is repeated, in practically the same words, at the close of the posthumous Fifth Book: "that intellectual sphere, the centre of which is everywhere and the circumference nowhere, and which we call God." And M. Marty-Laveaux believes it was from this latter passage that Pascal took the form for his *pensée;* since there is other evidence that, at the moment of sitting down to write, the latter had just finished reading Book Fifth.

This, then, was the manner in which François achieved his personal synthesis, his reconciliation of Plato and Christ: in the person of Pan, the All. In this, he does not differ from the Catholic mystic position of his age, from Marsilio Ficino or the *De Docta Ignorantia* of Nicholas of Cusa. His mysticism, true enough, may not be of exactly the same brand as that of these other men, who, like him, never found it necessary to leave the Church. If it is not the same, the explanation is that his temperament was not identical.

Rabelais is a man of the broad daylight. Yet, is it not precisely this broad daylight mood, and the accompanying feeling for health, which go to produce the metaphysical poet, from Lucretius to John Donne? François was a mystic in his own way; just as his one lineal Gallic successor of today, Joseph Delteil, the one artist bound to the Maître on the side of language, is a mystic—of the barnyard and the fresh-smelling manure heap. "Rabelais, Delteil," says Maurice Rouzaud, "the two sides of the same medallion: health."

And right here, curiously enough, we may come upon an exegesis on Rabelais' advertised "obscenity."

" . . . the truth about Rabelais," says William Carlos Williams, "now common property. He was not at all the fatheaded debauché we used to think him, gross, guffawing vulgarly, but a priest 'sensitized' to all such grossness. Else his style would not have assured his lasting out a year."

And then, continuing to speak of Rabelais and Joyce:

"Joyce is to be discovered a Catholic in his style then in something of its divine humanity. Down, down it goes from priesthood into slime as the church goes. The Catholic Church has always been unclean in its fingers and aloof in the head."

Rabelais was "aloof in the head."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

SHADOW-FIGHTS; SUBSTANTIAL FOES

The most reverend Cardinal du Bellay, not satisfied with these casual and popular manifestations of rejoicing over the nativity of so illustrious a prince . . . desired to stage, cost what it might, some spectacular affair, and one of a sort that none of us could remember having seen at Rome. . . . He was relieved of his perplexities by Lord Orazio Farnese, Duke of Castres, and by the Lords Roberto Strozzi and de' Maligni, who were worked up to a similar degree of enthusiasm. They proceeded to put four heads into one hat; and the upshot of it was, after a number of consultations, they decided upon a Sciomachia, *that is, a sham battle on both sea and land.*

THE SCIOMACHIA

All the more wicked, all the more dangerous, for the reason that he is learned, being one who makes so little of God and divine things that, with the exception of Impudence and Abuse, those goddesses to whom the Athenians sacrificed upon their altars, it would seem that he does not recognize any religion whatsoever.

THEOTIMUS

I

ON his way from Metz to Lyons, François may have stopped off in Paris, about July 10, 1547. A somewhat

dubious allusion in the *Sciomachia* to "the day the Lords of Jarnac and Châtaignerie fought at Paris" lends possible colour to this supposition; but if he passed through the capital, we have no further light than this on what he may have done there. Having handed in to the printer his uncompleted eleven chapters, he was off for Italy with the Du Bellay party. This was about the middle of August. On September 11, the Cardinal and his suite had arrived at Ferrara; on the 15th. and 16th., they passed through Bologna; and by the 27th., they were in Rome, where they found lodgings in the Sant' Apostolo Palace.

At Rome, François renewed relations with an old friend, Georges d'Armagnac, the Bishop of Rodéz, who had now been made a cardinal, and who was French ambassador at the court of Rome. He also met Guillaume Philandrier, an architectural Humanist (referred to in the *Briefve Declaration* as "Philander") and a young poet, Louis des Masures, who was later to mention the Maître in his work. Of the details of this, his third sojourn in Rome, his fourth in Italy, we know very little. On the 18th. of June the following year, if a certain document in the Fillon Collection is to be relied upon, we find him cashing a bill of exchange in the amount of thirty-two gold crowns, drawn by Arnauld Combraglia of Paris on the Delbenne and Olivieri bank, François giving a receipt. The Partial Edition of his Fourth Book meanwhile had appeared at Lyons, "Composed by M. François Rabelais, Doctor of Medicine and Sacristan of the Hyerean Isles." At Paris, his enemies were busy—

We might have remained in almost complete ignorance of what Maître François was doing from the fall of 1547 to the spring of 1549, had it not been for a certain royal event

which, occurring in France, gave rise to a celebration on the part of the Du Bellay household and the French colony in Rome, and so, inspired the Cardinal's physician to take up his epistolary pen once more. That event was the birth, on February 3, 1549, at the Château of Saint-Germain, of an heir, Louis, Duke of Orléans, to Henry II. and Catherine de' Medici. The news, in some miraculous fashion, had reached Rome at once, being confirmed seven days later by the bank couriers, and by the arrival of a royal envoy on the first of March. Upon receipt of the tidings, there were bonfires of joy for three nights in succession; and then it was, the Cardinal began to think how he might outdo himself; and after the "four heads into one hat," a sham battle, or "sciomachia," was staged.

It was at first planned to have a battle on both land and sea, but a rise in the Tiber forestalled the sea-fight. The land battle was then held in the Sant' Apostolo Square, one of the largest and the handsomest in Rome, immediately in front of the palace where Du Bellay resided. The affair was an elaborate one; and it was desirable that the French court should know just how elaborate it was. Rabelais, accordingly, sat down and wrote a complete and vivid description, in the form of a letter to the Cardinal de Guise, a communication intended for the royal eyes or ears. Later, he worked over this account, touching it up considerably, "and for a reason"; and when, the following fall, he returned to France and passed through Lyons, he handed the revised manuscript to Sébastien Gryphe, who published it shortly afterwards under the title *La Sciomachie, et Festins Faicts à Rome*, etc.

The *Sciomachia* shows Rabelais to have been a painstak-

ing and excellent reporter. His account reminds us, distinctly, of a modern pressman covering a public function. He gets it all in: gets the "colour," the "sidelights" and, what every city-editor insists upon, "names." His style is in the best reportorial tradition: simple, straightforward, with "the punch in the lead."

Incidentally, this document shows us what sort of cheer was kept by the Du Bellay ménage in Rome. The Sciomachia was followed by a feast, at which there were "a myriad varieties of fish . . . more than 500 different oven-products, by which I mean pastries, tarts and the like. . . . 150-dozen loaves of bread," and "the drinks were numerous . . . the house of My Most Reverend Lord being open to all comers, no matter whom, all that day."

François' reason for rewriting his *Sciomachia* was his desire to perform a service for his friend and patron, the Cardinal. Things were now turning against the latter. Henry II. had taken away his political superintendency, and had sent him an aid in the person of Ippolito d'Este, Cardinal of Ferrara, with whom Du Bellay was unable to agree. On the 22nd. of September, therefore, the French prelate left Rome, and Rabelais went with him, after having injected into the *Sciomachia* all the eulogies he could muster for the Du Bellays.

At Lyons, the cardinal found orders from the King awaiting him, directing that he return at once to the Holy City to take part in the conclave which was about to open, following the death of Paul III. on November 10. He went to Marseilles and took boat immediately, parting company with Maître François, who probably returned to Paris; this, at least, is the inference to be drawn from the fact that

Jean du Bellay found himself without a physician when he needed one, in July, 1550. The months from November, 1549, to August of the following year are dark so far as François' movements are concerned; M. Clouzot thinks he may have established relations with the Lorraine and Coligny households.

II

Rabelais came back to France—many thought he was dead—to find himself the centre of a storm of abuse, chiefly stirred up by one Gabriel de Puy-Herbault (Puits-Herbault), a monk of Fontevrault. This monk, in a work entitled *Theotimus*, had undertaken a wholesale assault, in the name of the Sorbonne brand of religion, on the reading matter of an age. Not only all the old romances of chivalry, including the *Roman de la Rose*, but such contemporary works as the *Adolescence Clementine* of Marot, provided his targets. It was, however, for Maître François that he reserved the greater measure of his spleen and venom, the passages referring to Rabelais being typographically set off in such a fashion that the reader could not possibly miss them. The author, it seemed, had been particularly wrought up by the word "Pantagruelism," and now proceeded to attack "the clown who had invented that clowning word." He accused Rabelais of spending his days in gluttony and drunkenness and of living "after the Greek mode," vomiting forth poison in his writings and residing all the while under the protection of a prince of the Church.

"He is a man as dangerous on account of his impiety as he is by reason of the public scandal which his books

cause. . . . He is possessed of neither the fear of God nor a respect for men, but tramples under foot and turns into ridicule all things human and divine. . . . More than once, I have deplored the fate of a man . . . who brings to his own damnation that erudition with which he is endowed."

There is a legend which may be mentioned in passing, though it is no more than a legend, to the effect that Puy-Herbault's venom was to be explained by his being a brother of the monk whom Maître François had taken as his model for Friar John Hackem.

About a year later, Puy-Herbault was to find a supporter in Charles de Sainte-Marthe, the platonic poet and court favourite, who was the son of Gaucher de Sainte-Marthe, Antoine Rabelais' old rival. In his *In Psalmum Nonagesimum*, Sainte-Marthe congratulates François' assailant at some length. This was the last thing which might have been expected of a man of his type of mind; for he was a delicate and a graceful poet, and not at all the sort who would ordinarily have come to the defence of a man and writer like this "mad Putherb" (Puy-Herbault's name in Latin was Putherbeus), who so lavishly spilled forth his nauseous praises of the Sorbonnists, comparing the latter, as upholders of the Catholic faith, to Atlas of old. The only possible explanation that can be given, therefore, is that Sainte-Marthe was still animated by that old family feud and by a memory of what François had done with that feud in his Cake-Bakers' War.

Maître François appears to have bent under the lash of a growing unpopularity, of which the Putherbean attack was but one manifestation. His name, for instance, had been

dragged into the Ramus-Galland-Aristotle controversy; Galland, in attacking Aristotle's academic foe, had written: "The majority of those who read your chatter (*hasce nugas*) do not do so for any profit they may get from it; but they read you for the same reason that they do those books in the vernacular about that silly Pantagruel—that is to say, merely for sport and pleasure." Is it any wonder, if the Maître, by this time, had about made up his mind "not to write another iota"? He seems to have given up, for the moment, the idea of going on with Book Fourth; and it was only the good services of his friend, the Cardinal of Châtillon, with Henry II. that eventually persuaded him to finish and publish the book; Henry followed his father's example, by graciously coming through with a royal Privilege.

It even has been conjectured that François may have been sacrified by his until then tried and true friend, Cardinal du Bellay, as a victim to Puy-Herbault's wrath. This has been seen as a possible reason why Rabelais did not accompany the cardinal to the conclave at Rome. Putherbeus' criticism of a prince of the Church for harbouring such a character may have had its effect, after all. In any case, we do not find François' name on the list of physicians, surgeons, spicers (*aromatarii*), and barbers who were in attendance at the conclave; and what is more, when the cardinal, en route back to France, falls seriously ill in a little Apennine village between Florence and Bologna, the only thing in the way of a professional man to give him succour is "*ung viel bon homme de medecin*" who had been found round about ("*cy alentour*"); as a result, His Eminence is compelled to implore the assistance of the Duke of Flor-

ence, and it is Cosimo de' Medici's first physician who puts the prelate in shape for the balance of the trip.

It was on the 25th. of July that the Cardinal fell ill; for the former Bishop of Paris—he had resigned that office in favour of his brother, Eustache du Bellay, on the 15th. of March preceding—was taking the months of July and August for his return by slow stages to France, with stop-overs in various places, Bologna, Ferrara, Modena and elsewhere, in order that there might be time to ascertain the reception which he was due to receive at court. The months of August to October he spent at Saint-Maur in rebuilding his shattered health, and it appears certain that François was with him there. The following winter (1551–52), the Cardinal probably passed in his Bishopric of Mans; and it was, undoubtedly, while at Mans that he saw fit to confer upon Rabelais the curacy of St.-Martin-de-Meudon, left vacant by the resignation of Richard Berthe, and that of St.-Christophe de Jambet, in Sarthe. The new curate was installed on January 18, 1551, by the Cardinal's vicar-general, Jean Ursin.

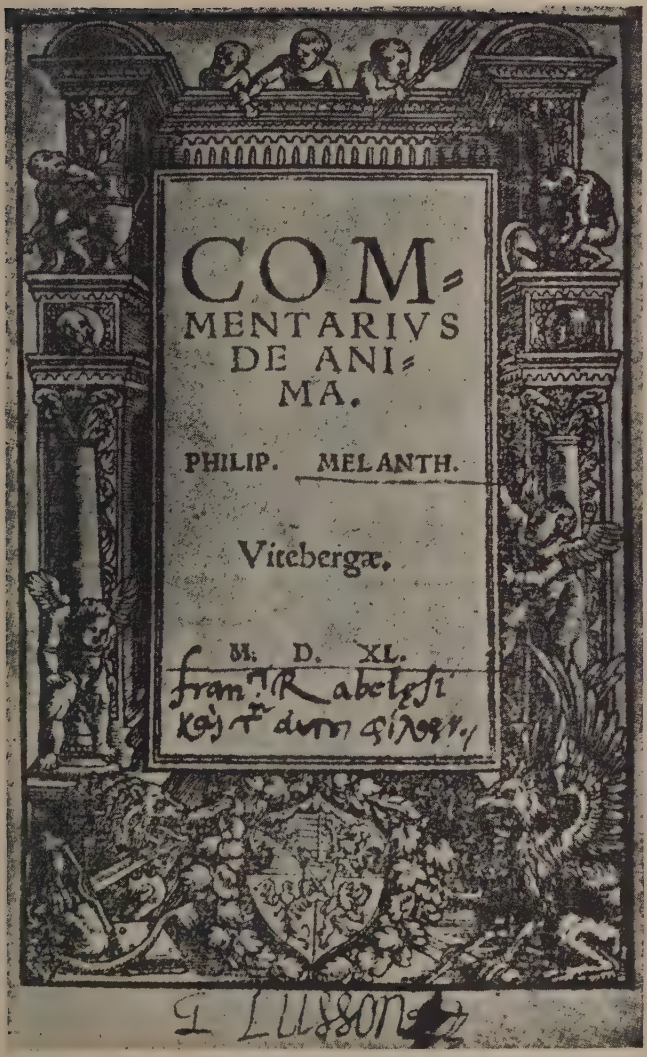
François' life-dream had been realized: he had a living in the Church at last! He was now no longer entitled to that fifty-pounds annuity which the Chevalier de Langey had left him, until he should have attained a benefice worth three hundred pounds; but this made little difference, probably, one way or another.

III

It was always Rabelais' fate to be a little behindhand in his politics by the time his books came out, a possibility

which any literary propagandist must face. In completing his Fourth Book, François had toned down anything in the original Partial Edition which might give offence. On the other hand, he had, in finishing the book, made of it a Gallican tract, in behalf of Henry versus Julius III. In this, it is possible that the hand of Du Bellay, an ardent Gallican, as well as of Châtillon, is to be descried. But now, unhappily, the wind was blowing from the other direction once more, and the Pope and the King were on the road to being reconciled, a treaty of peace being signed on the 29th. of April, 1552, or two months to a day, almost, after the publication of Book Fourth by Michel Fezandat. Attacks on the Roman See, which had been popular a few months before, were now decidedly unpopular; and the inevitable outcome was, Rabelais' latest work was condemned by act of Parliament, at the instigation, as usual, of the Sorbonne; the parliamentary records in the case are to be found in the national archives.

An ironic circumstance was the fact that one of the magistrates who stopped the sale of the work was none other than that same "good, learned, wise, human, mild and just" André Tiraqueau, the friend of François' youth, under whose laurel-thickets the latter had sat discussing Greek aorists and feminine imperfects. What had happened was, simply, this: Tiraqueau, with the years and an eminently successful judicial career (he had had a hand in the condemnation of Calvin's *Institutes*), had grown more and more ponderous and respectable. He had become a leading citizen and a pillar of the community; and the Curate of Meudon was anything but respectable in the reputation he enjoyed at this time.



"For the Soul Never Dwells in a Dry Spot"

(Rabelais' Autograph on a Copy of the De Anima of Melanchthon. Bywater Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford)

Book Fourth was censured on the first of March, and by the next October, a rumour was current at Lyons, as we see from a letter of Denys Lambin, the Humanist, that the author of the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel* was in prison.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

PANTAGRUEL AND THE PLAIN-SONG

"Let us go to Meudon; there, we shall see the château, the terrace, the grottoes, and M. le Curé, the most prepossessing of chaps in appearance, and of the finest humour imaginable, who gives his friends and all good folks the best reception and entertainment in his power."

BERMIER: JUGEMENTS SUR LES ŒUVRES DE RABELAIS

. . . had them sing the Magnificat at matins, and found it quite all right.

BOOK FIRST, CHAPTER XI.

I

IT is probable, the modern Rabelaisian scholar will tell us, that Maître François never fulfilled in person his curate's functions. This belief is based upon the fact that the records of the diocese of Paris are eloquently silent with regard to his priestly activities; when the new bishop, Eustache du Bellay, visited Meudon, he found the vicar, one Pierre Richard, in charge, with four other priests to assist him.

Where was Rabelais during these last two years of his life? He likely resided in Paris, paying frequent visits to his convalescent friend, the Cardinal, at Saint-Maur. For

despite the desertion of Tiraqueau and a number of others among his former Humanist comrades in arms, he still had one or two good friends left. It could not be said that he was utterly alone; in life as with posterity, he had his friends and his enemies, the Rabelaisians and the anti-Rabelaisians.

If the Curate of Meudon did not officiate in person, two traditional and conflicting pictures are at once done away with. One is the "jolly Curate of Meudon" whom the curious are supposed to have journeyed out to see. The other is that given us by the older biographers, Antoine Leroy and Guillaume Colletet, a picture of a quiet grey-haired parish priest, "very punctilious in the care of his flock, and teaching the plain-song, of which he was master, to the children." This latter picture is one which is accepted as late as the mid-nineteenth-century, by Rabelais' first really modern and scientific biographer, M. E.-J.-B. Rathery; there is a body of seventeenth-century tradition in support of it, but the modern scholar says that these reports are no more than tradition. It is with something like regret that one accepts the erudite verdict. That picture would have been so enchanting: the creator of Gargantua and Pantagruel teaching the plain-song to the little ones! Cf. the Drunkards: "Let's intone a little motet. Where is my intoner (*mon entonnoir*)?" Or Friar John: "A mass, a matins or a vespers well rung is half sung."

One would like, too, to think of this greying curate-physician of ours, already struck, it may be, with his last illness, strolling about the walks of his parish and thinking back over a period of thirty years, to his Fontenay-le-Comte days, when, in the company of Pierre Amy, he had become involved in his first serious scrape, "for the love of Greek."

His life, one might say, had been devoted to the Humanist cause, in a belief that free-born men are possessed of "a certain instinct and spur . . . which is the thing called honour." How much of this belief was with him at the end? How much of it remains at the close of any life? Did he then turn to that Intellectual Sphere, "the centre of which is everywhere, the circumference nowhere"?

The evidence with regard to Rabelais' curacy, it may be observed, is of a purely negative sort; there is no evidence that he personally fulfilled his functions, and there is none to the effect that he did not do so.

On January 9, 1553, in the throes of mortal illness, no doubt,—Asclepiades had broken down at last,—the Maître resigned his two curacies; a copy of his resignation is preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale. The Meudon charge went to Gille du Serre, of the diocese of Beauvais, while that of St.-Christophe de Jambet was conferred upon Claude de Bise of the diocese of Anjou (see the allusion to "the Curate of Jambet," in Book Fifth, Chapter XXVIII., Chapter XXIX. in Le Motteux' version). His death occurred "at Paris, in a house in the rue des Jardins," and he was "buried in St. Paul's Cemetery," according to the *Épitaphier* of the church in question. The record gives the date of his death as April 9, 1553. In that same month, Jean du Bellay set out to pay his own last visit to the Holy City, and the fact that Dr. François did not accompany the patient whom he had treated for twenty years tends to indicate that the date in the *Épitaphier* is correct.

It is known that, in any case, Rabelais' death occurred before March 1, 1554; for under that date, we find his Epitaph in the *Premières Poésies* of Jacques Tahureau:

Ce docte nez Rabelays, qui picquoyt
Les plus piquans, dort soubz la lame icy
Et de ceux mesme en mourant se moquoyt
Qui de sa mort prenoyent quelque soucy.

("The learned Rabelais, who stung even the most stinging ones, lies here under this stone; and in dying, he mocked even at those who were most concerned over his death.")

Here, we have another Rabelaisian legend: that of the Great Jester, who kept up the jest until the end. Tahureau's Epitaph is reminiscent of the two probably apocryphal death-bed sayings attributed to the Maître: "*Tirez le rideau; la farce est jouée* (Draw the curtain; the farce is played)" and "*Je vais querir un grand peut-être* (I go to seek a big maybe)." And if the Maître did utter these remarks, it was not, necessarily, with the significance which since has been read into them. In a sermon by a devout Franciscan of the time, we read: "This present life is a farce; but in death . . . the body returns to dust, while the soul goes out to seek adventure." It was the century of adventurous souls.

II

François Rabelais has had two lives: the life he lived before death; and that other life, down the reading ages, which began with his death. The latter life has been almost as harried a one as was the former. Vilified and adulated, praised and slandered, plagiarized and popularized, interpreted now this way, now that, to suit the purpose of the interpreter, he has met with few to do him the simple justice

of an attempt to see him clearly and see him whole. There has long been need of a definite *placement* of the author of the *Gargantua* and the *Pantagruel*, a placement on the artistic, and on the intellectual and spiritual sides. Such a placement is not easy; the Maître is a man of big girth, and it may be that the lapse of some centuries was needed for the task; it may be that it is too early as yet; it may be that he never will, that he never can be placed, and that his tired ghost will continue to propound a haunting but insoluble riddle; it is something, nevertheless, to have made the attempt. There are men out of the past who are subjects merely for a biographic narrative, however thrilling in movement that narrative may be; there are others who so touch and concern ourselves, of this day, that they are like incubi, riding our souls until there be an answer. Of these is François.

It is so easy to hash up the legendary and the picturesque, to give the public the Rabelais whom they have always known, and whom they wish to see again, to give them the big belly, and to forget the brain above the belly; it is easy, likewise, to dish up the results of contemporary Rabelaisian scholarship, in the manner of a lyceum lecturer rummaging the encyclopædia by way of preparation for a session with the women's clubs. Scholarship has performed a valuable service by wiping out the fables and setting up the facts; but it is inclined to forget that a man is something more than documents, and that Rabelais was an artist as well as a man. The hard thing is to try to see, with one's own aching eyes, both man and artist, and then to endeavour to transfer to others this vision, this "psychologic model," on one's own retina.

"Nor Charlatan of the Public Square"

(*Statue of Rabelais at Chinon*)

That other life of François', that life after death, would make good reading; but it is another story. It was nine years after his death that the *Isle Sonnante*, the first version of the Fifth Book, was given to the world, the complete Book being published two years later. There can be little room for doubt that this Book is nothing more than a worked-over version of the Maître's notes and papers. It is Rabelais' in spots, but only in spots. There is a certain tendency, now, to swing back toward a belief in the book's authenticity; but it is hard to see how this theory is to be made to stand. If Book Fifth is Rabelais', it is Rabelais in his dotage; it is not Rabelais the artist, who is to be encountered in the preceding books.

From shortly after the author's death, editions of his works become numerous; and they continue to multiply, if not always to replenish the earth, down to the present day. No writer has been more widely read, or more talked about without being read. Regarded by his own and the following century as a writer for the mob, or at best as a pleasing teller of popular tales (Montaigne's dictum will be recalled), he was looked down upon by the very proper eighteenth century, which read him under cover and lied about it. Voltaire saw in him only a buffoon, until he found it convenient to see an anti-clerical, and made rather a fool of himself over the whole matter. The Romantics of the 1830's rescued Rabelais for the very good reason that they needed him, just as the *Surréalistes* have need of Isadore Ducasse. And now, the Joyceans, who have most right to him of all—

En route, the Maître has influenced many, not too many, writers. Molière, La Fontaine, Rousseau are his disciples. In English, Nash, Sterne and others. Nash, with Sir Thomas

Urquhart, Rabelais' seventeenth-century translator, is the link between the *Gargantua-Pantagruel* and *Ulysses;* though as for Sir Thomas, he is more Urquhart than Rabelais.

For it is on the side of language that Rabelais is great, and on the side of language that he, as an artist, will live. One who would lay hold of Rabelais the creator must take him here. Language is his essential, language and health and laughter. Rabelais, Pascal and Delteil: possibly, the three greatest of French prose-writers.

But when all is said, Maître François is very apt to remain, not only an Enigma, but, in the words of the *Sainct Envoyé*, all things to all men. There are some of us who, seeking to know him in order that we may learn to know ourselves, are tempted, in less critical and more affectionate moments, to fall back upon Barbey d'Aurevilly's glowing apostrophe:

"My adorable old Rabelais. . . . A mastodon radiantly emerged from the blue of a nascent world."

THE END

1. Bel uedere.
2. Palazzo del Papa.
3. Castello di Gio Angelo.
4. Tepere fiume.
5. S. maria del populo.
6. S. Vitale
7. Santa Susana
8. Stufe de Dioclitiano.
9. San Laarentio.
10. Acque dotti.
11. S.
12. C
13. S
14. A
15. T

I A

ano.
esser posto il colisco, edefitio grãde
ma l'angustia del luoco l'ha escluso.
16. Colonna d'Adriano.
isiano.
17. Arco di settimio.
dove anco deve,
18. Campidoglio.
19. Ponte sisto.
20. Colõna Antonina,
21. Chiesa di s. pietro.

by

MAURICE HINDUS

Author of "Broken Earth," etc.

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With a Foreword by JOHN DEWEY

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